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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

ALLEN HUTT

THE PASSCHENDAELE OF THE PRESS

IVOR MONTAGU

GAITSKELL'S CAMPAIGN

RON WILLETTS

A WORLD WITHOUT A HERO

THE FUTURE OF BROADCASTING

DISCUSSION:

JOAN SIMON

ON HOW NEW IS THE "NEW LEFT"?

C. EASON

ON PAPERBACKS

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Editorial Comments

ACCORDING to Tory and right-wing Labour theory the state is an impartial body carrying out the will of Parliament, which in its turn carries out the will of the electorate. The state apparatus is not biased, we are told. It will operate as devotedly for a Labour Party carrying out a progressive policy as it does for the Tories. Some people go further and allege that the state apparatus is an independent body in its own right, which seeks in various ways to influence all the big political parties and public opinion generally.

The Tory and right-wing Labour theorists would fiercely dispute the statement of the meeting of representatives of the Communist Parties in Moscow in November 1960, which said:

By tightening the monopolies' grip on the life of the nation, state monopoly capitalism closely combines the power of the monopolies with that of the state, with the aim of saving the capitalist system and increasing the profits of the imperialist bourgeoisie to the utmost by exploiting the working class and plundering large sections of the population.

Yet one of the features of the existing set-up is the tendency of the top ranks of the state apparatus either to find jobs with large capitalist firms when they retire or to leave the service to join such firms before they reach pensionable age. Chiefs of the armed forces who retire at an early age have little difficulty in joining the boards of the large firms.

In the *Daily Mail* of February 1st the following examples of recent migrations of top state personnel are given: Air Chief Marshal Sir Harry Broadhurst retires and becomes the £10,000-a-year managing director of the well-known aircraft firm of A. V. Roe.

Lord Tedder on ceasing to be Chief of Air Staff became associated with the Standard Motor firm.

Sir Geoffrey Tuttle, the former Deputy Chief of Air Staff and a rocket expert, became a director of Vickers-Armstrong.

Air Vice-Marshal Wilfred Oulton on retirement goes to the Board of Electrical and Musical Industries.

Sir William Strath, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Aviation, went on to the board of British Aluminium.

Sir James Helmore, of the Ministry of Supply, quit and joined Warburgs, the well-known firm of merchant bankers.

Sir Arnold Hall, whom the *Daily Mail* describes as "chief boffin of the Farnborough Air Establishment," joined the Hawker-Siddeley group of companies, and Dr. F. E. Jones, of the same establishment, described by the *Daily Mail* as an "electronics wizard," joined Mullards, the electronics firm, as a director.

According to the *Daily Mail*, some top civil servants are saying that "with industry falling over itself to offer posts worth double or more in salary and perks than Government jobs, can you blame anyone for switching."

Well, it all depends on your point of view. All we would say is that such a close link between top state servants and the big firms confirms the Marxist view of state monopoly capitalism and makes nonsense of all bourgeois theories of the "impartial state" or the "independent state."

Taxation's Task, or Relief for the Rich

Sir William McFadyean, President of the Federation of British Industries, seems to be another staunch believer in state monopoly capitalism. "The most perfervid champion of private enterprise must recognise that some guidance of the economy by the Government over the bumps and round the bends of the road we have travelled since the war has been inescapable. Indeed, it is part of the general framework of central action without which private industry could not go forward in confidence with its own plans and projects," he tells readers of *The Times Review of Industry* in February.

Sir William was contributing to a Symposium in which a number of big business men discuss what methods the Government should employ in an endeavour to control the economy. All of them dislike control through the raising or lowering of hire purchase terms. They point out that the durable consumer industries—cars, television, washing machines, furniture, etc.—are particularly liable to sharp fluctuations, anyhow. When, on top of that, they are stimulated at one moment by reductions on hire purchase terms and restrained at the next moment by their increases, then the natural jumpiness of the industries is accentuated. So the tycoons want the Government to abandon using hire purchase as a means of controlling the economy (most motor workers would say Amen) and some of them are in favour of sharp cuts in the higher ranges of purchase tax.

However, they are still in favour of the state doing something to regulate the economy, and they propose that it should be done by imposing new indirect taxation. They want taxes on consumers which will be raised when the Government wants to restrain a boom and lowered when the Government wants to give a stimulus. Top favourite is a general sales tax, on almost everything, goods as well as services (*The Economist* which is more adventurous than the tycoons wants to tax all ranges of food, including restaurant meals). They further propose to raise and lower the workers' insurance contributions as a means of raising or lowering his consumption. Then the workers' employer is expected to pay a payroll tax based on the number of workers he employs. This tax may also be raised or lowered.

Now in estimating these proposals one must never forget that taxation is not merely concerned with regulating the economy but with placing the financial burden for running the state on the various social classes. It so happens that the employers' proposals for abolishing or reducing purchase tax, especially on luxury goods, and replacing it with a general sales tax would shift some of the burden of taxation from the rich to the mass of the people. The same applies to the proposal to raise or lower insurance contributions.

In a way this exposes the customary Keynesian methods of manipulating the economy. Keynesians are so used to dealing with large aggregates—consumption and investment—that they seldom ask what are the class interests and the class conflicts which those aggregates conceal. Whose investment? Whose consumption? has to be asked. In this case a discussion about what taxes would best enable the Government to control the economy (if that is possible) conceals the fact that what is also being advocated is the tax relief of the rich at the expense of the vast majority of the population. The working-class movement should not be deceived into believing that either the tycoons or the Keynesian manipulators are concerned with the public welfare.

Brecht in English

The belated appearance of a consistent edition of the plays of Bertolt Brecht in English translation (Vol. I at 25s., just published by Methuen) is very welcome. It seems a pity that the edition, now it has come, is not a little more scholarly and informative. Brecht worked for a long time on most of his plays, revising and changing them a good deal, so it is important to know *exactly* the versions and dates one is dealing with. But the main thing is that at last we have in a convenient and accessible form relatively good translations of

the work of the greatest Communist dramatist to date and the greatest dramatist of the twentieth century.

Volume I contains, besides the radio-play *The Trial of Lucullus*, the early but essential *Threepenny Opera* and two of the finest of the late plays—both masterpieces—*The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *The Life of Galileo*. How tame, after *The Threepenny Opera*, in its brutal strength and wit, seem most of the contemporary musicals which derive from it! And how thin and anaemic, beside *Galileo*, is the usual twentieth-century conception of the historical play!

All readers of German agree that Brecht inevitably suffers a good deal in translation. Much of the beauty as well as the irony of his writing comes from the tricks he plays with the German language. But because the essence of his poetic power is his apprehension of the dialectical nature of reality the *meaning* of his poetry comes across even if its subtle flavours and compressions are sometimes lost. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* is a revolutionary play in form just as much as in the implications of its content. The first part tells the story of the servant girl who succours the child whom the rich parents do not love and follows, normal, though unusually flexible, dramatic narrative methods up to the climax when the rival claims of real and foster-parents are to be decided in court. At this point Brecht suddenly poses a question which only a Marxist dramatist would pose: "But what manner of man was the judge? On the social morality of which class does he base his judgment?" And to answer this question a change of dramatic emphasis is essential. Instead of the girl, Grusha, the judge Azdak becomes the chief character, the centre of the drama.

It is a criticism of our theatre that this magnificent play has not yet been given a professional performance in English. But the publication of this first volume of plays should increase our chances of seeing Brecht's work in our language as well as making it possible for those who understand German to study the plays before the London visit of the Berliner Ensemble later this year.

The Cash Nexus

A theme repeated *ad nauseam* in the fight against Communism is that while conditions of material life may have improved in the socialist countries, the price paid has been the loss of "freedom", the destruction of those shining "moral values" which are the most precious possession of "the West".

By way of contrast Herbert Aptheker, the editor of our American contemporary, *Political Affairs* (December 1960), examines "American Morality".

Limitations of space forbid extensive reproduction of the many interesting points he makes. We must therefore content ourselves with reproducing some of the views which he quotes of well-known American writers and intellectuals on this question.

Thus John Steinbeck, recently returning to the United States, was struck by what he found to be "the all-pervading nerve-gas of immorality". Norman Mailer described the current American literary scene as "a most loathsome literary world, necrophiliac to the core; they murder their writers and then decorate their graves."

Theodore White, the author of several best sellers, wrote in the August 1960 issue of *Esquire*, "the air we live in today is full of a kind of radioactive poisoning, a radium dust of greed and hot money . . . the final sense of purpose has evaporated. We're living in a climate of total moral confusion . . . ideas and dreams, which are rather precious commodities, are sold like fishcakes."

James T. Farrell, in an article entitled "The Decline of the Serious Writer" (1957), declared that "seriousness, ideas, literature, cannot easily be merchandised." Hence, as a rule, writers fearing "bankruptcy and ill health" have given up such ambitions. It is therefore not surprising that Farrell himself is at work on two books—both dealing with professional baseball.

A young lecturer at an American college, Robert Demaria, sums up the prevalent trends in American academic institutions as "a process of undermining or stifling the young intellectual," some of whom hold out and "whisper vaguely and even mystically that there is still something really worth while in the world."

Over a hundred years ago Karl Marx pinpointed this development. In the *Communist Manifesto* he wrote:

"The bourgeoisie . . . has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'. . . .

"The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers."

The moral miasma engulfing the United States is a consequence of the extreme decadence of U.S. imperialism. Millions of Americans faced with unemployment, short time, bad housing, poverty—as President Kennedy has himself admitted—in the richest capitalist country in the world, know that there is something "worth while" in the world. This is the struggle to end the rule of U.S. monopoly capitalism. Led by our courageous American comrades, they are waging this struggle—more tenaciously than most of us realise.

Siqueiros Imprisoned

David Alfaro Siqueiros is the only living member of "Los Tres Grandes"—the Three Great Men—of the Mexican Mural Movement, which made so great a mark in the world of visual arts in the 1920's.

During this past summer he was working on a mural in the historic Castle of Chapultepec, which was to have been unveiled last November, the fiftieth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. It occupies a space of 1,200 square feet in the Hall of the Revolution, and Siqueiros himself considers it one of his greatest achievements.

But the mural is unfinished, for Siqueiros has been imprisoned by the Government that commissioned him to paint it. The Government is celebrating its revolutionary anniversary by defying its revolutionary traditions. Siqueiros is imprisoned under charges of carrying arms, injuring policemen, resisting arrest and "dangerous attacks." The Government admits that he did not personally commit any of these offences, nor was he even present when these "crimes" allegedly were committed in the course of a demonstration of the National Students' Federation in support of Cuba. He has, moreover, been charged with "social dissolution," a crime which is a combination of the American Criminal Syndicalism Laws and the American Smith Act rolled into one and adapted by the Mexican Government. Passed in 1941, it has never been tested in the higher courts, and most outstanding Mexican lawyers consider it unconstitutional. However, on this charge Siqueiros can be held for a whole year without a hearing and faces a possible penalty of two to twelve years in prison.

For Siqueiros there was never any contradiction between his life and aims as an artist and his life and aims as a revolutionary. As an art student he took part in student strikes. In 1913 he joined the revolutionary force and became a captain. In the 1920's he was equally concerned with the beginnings of the Mexican Mural Movement and with the struggles of the workers. For a period he organised miners and in 1927 was the General Secretary of the Workers' Federation of the State of Jalisco. He lived in exile for a number of years because of his political activities. He fought with the International Brigade in Spain; he has for many years been a leading member of the Mexican Communist Party.

In recent months in Mexico there have been some alarming developments. Particularly ominous is the formation of a Senate Committee on Un-Mexican Activities. It would seem that the arrest of Siqueiros and the charges against him represent the Government's message to the artists

and intellectuals of Mexico to keep quiet about Cuba, and especially to cease all demonstrations of solidarity towards the working class. From his prison cell Siqueiros has stated:

"I am a victim of a political policy which when it cannot win a discussion . . . takes out a pistol and shouts, 'Shut up.' But prison does not extinguish a political position that is revolutionary and historically just."

A Committee for the Defence of Siqueiros has been formed and all statements and resolutions of solidarity with this great artist should be sent to the Mexican Embassy in London.

Who are "The Mob"?

The Historians' Group of the Communist Party has just issued the winter number of *Our History*, under the title of "The Common People, 1688-1800." It deals, amongst other things, with the fascinating problem, much neglected by historians, as to who were the people so often described as "the mob". Who organised and participated in the many popular demonstrations and uprisings in the course of the 18th century, and what was the background of these popular protests?

The Bulletin discusses the nature of this "mob" and its class composition. It discusses particularly the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685, the movement of the Gloucestershire Weavers of 1756, the struggles of the people in the cause of "Wilkes and Liberty" and the Gordon Riots. It also contains a short note on the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information of the 1790's.

The word "mob" derives from the Latin phrase "mobile vulgus," meaning the "fickle, or excitable crowd." It was in this classical form that the term first came to be used in England towards the end of the Elizabethan period. In an age

when the advance of capitalism and the spread of depopulating enclosures in the countryside were creating the beginnings of a proletariat, men thus cut off from their means of livelihood and forced to roam the land in search of work, were designated by Elizabethan legislation as "rogues," "vagabonds" and "sturdy beggars" and were ordered to be whipped or branded for these crimes. Many must have trekked to London and other growing towns to swell the numbers of the urban populace. It is in 1600 that the "ignorant multitude" is first referred to as the "mobile vulgus," later shortened to "mob."

The meaning of the word soon began to alter and "the lower orders" soon came to be known as "the mob," even when not acting openly to disrupt the peace. There is a rather modern ring about Bishop Burnet's description of the Prince of Orange, who thought religion was only for the "mob."

There has been a little study of the social composition of the rioters in relation to the "Wilkes and Liberty" movement in London and the Gordon Riots. In both places London journeymen, apprentices and labourers appeared to predominate, not "criminal elements" or the "slum population." Elsewhere the wage-earning population of town and countryside seemed to predominate, like the weavers of Spitalfields and the West Country, and the weavers and labourers of Wiltshire, etc. Sometimes sections of the "middle classes" were also involved.

The whole issue of the Bulletin deals with this fascinating problem and we highly recommend it to general readers as well as to specialists. (*Our History* can be obtained either from bookshops or from its Business Manager at 24 Beatrice Road, London, N.4, at 1s. 6d. an issue or, for the annual four issues 5s. post free.)

The Passchendaele of the Press

An Object Lesson in Monopoly Capitalism

Allen Hutt

AROUND last Christmas I had a request from the Faculty of Journalism in the University of Moscow to write for their journal a brief survey of the growing concentration of capital in the British press, starkly exemplified in the closures and combinations of 1960 (notably, of course, the Rothermere group's swallowing of the *News Chronicle* and *The Star*). Little did I suspect, as I finished the piece and sent it off in mid-January, that it was going to be so outpaced by events; or, alternatively, that its central thesis on the trend to press monopoly was to receive such startling new justification. But within a week of my article starting on its way to the Dean of the Moscow Faculty, the Thomson-Mirror-Odhams affair had shaken the country in a way none of the other major take-over bids of recent years has done.

The political and social importance of the press naturally accounts for the special sensation caused by this great leap forward by monopoly capitalism, making such a total farce (as John Gollan remarked) of the traditional shibboleths about press "freedom". The shrewdest commentators were startled into admissions of apocalyptic quality. "Whatever happens, there will be casualties on the Passchendaele scale now that the great powers have joined battle", prophesied Mammon, the City columnist of *The Observer* (January 29th, 1961). The political correspondent of *The Times* (January 27th, 1961) wrote that "there is no doubt" that the Prime Minister "and other senior Ministers are gravely considering the implications not only for Britain and its press but for capitalism as a whole".

To Marxists these "implications" are very simple. Capitalism in newspaper and periodical publishing is not immune from the general laws of capitalism. The fact that there is a power-and-propaganda motive (the press being, as old C. P. Scott put it, "an instrument of government") parallel with the profit motive in no way detracts from the basic character of the last named. Indeed it enhances it. And the normal tendency for capital to concentrate in larger and larger units, for capitalism to become monopoly capitalism, has been a growing feature of press development during the whole of this century. What makes present events startling is that the amount,

the quantity, of the sudden new concentration—with its special corollary of monopoly in the magazine field, considered in detail below—is so great that its qualitative impact is different from that of any of its predecessors.

What bourgeois critics have long bemoaned as the "commercialisation of journalism" is a very old story, of course. Half a century ago Binney Dibblee wrote in his Home University Library study: "There is little distinction now made between newspaper properties and any other, except that their political influence adds some considerable extra value to their market price. In almost the majority of cases they are owned by limited companies. Their possession does not carry with it the feeling of a public trust; to own one means just so much money and so much power" (*The Newspaper*, 1912, p. 106). A quarter of a century ago the same theme ran through much of Wickham Steed's well-known Penguin Special, culminating in the remark: "If ever the 'newspaper industry' seeks . . . to look upon itself solely or chiefly as a business for the enrichment of its owners or shareholders, it will be doomed as a public institution" (*The Press*, 1938, p. 13).

Doomsday may well be said to have arrived now, which is a highly encouraging thing for the Labour movement and the people in general. The "Northcliffe Revolution" of 1896 is coming full circle. For what young Alfred Harmsworth did when he launched the *Daily Mail* as the first mass-circulation national daily was not, as is sometimes thought, to revolutionise journalism. That had already been done, and he simply applied it. His fundamental contribution was commercial. He opened the era of big business in the press by the device of the net sales certificate, which tied big advertising with mass circulation. The result was, as Steed put it, to produce "an advertisement-ridden press", with "numerical circulation the main criterion of publicity-value" (*The Press*, pp. 144-45). And the circulation-advertising rat-race that Northcliffe initiated has long since reached such proportions that it is at once the plague, as well as the central factor, of capitalist press economics; and, it should be noted, a major force motivating the drive to concentration and monopoly.

Monopoly Suppliers and Distributors

It is well known that the importance of advertising to the capitalist newspaper or periodical is that it bridges the gap between selling price and cost of production—newspapers and magazines being strange among commodities in that they are sold below cost price. At the same time production costs have been pushed up, and kept up, because the basic raw materials are in the hands of monopolies or near-monopolies, as are the main items of capital equipment. The prices paid by newspapers for their newsprint and their machinery are monopoly prices. Newsprint is the outstanding example, where the supply is overwhelmingly dominated by two giant concerns, Bowaters and Reeds, and price has risen from £11 a ton pre-war to over £58 a ton now. But it is not commonly realised that a comparable situation exists in the supply of newspaper plant.

There are only two world concerns manufacturing the basic machinery for the newspaper composing room, Linotype and Intertype (the former still controlled in all countries by the American parent company, Mergenthaler Linotype). When an Italian company some years ago began manufacturing linotype machines at a cheaper price it was promptly bought over by the Linotype concern. For headline-setting the Ludlow machine is still the monopoly of an American company, and has to be paid for in dollars. For rotary presses the choice in this country lies between only three concerns, Goss, Hoe-Crabtree and Scott-Vickers, with negligible price variations; and press equipment is the major capital investment for a newspaper, a large installation (like that put in by Thomson Newspapers in their London plant to print the *Sunday Times*) costing in excess of £2 million.

Finally, there is the monopolistic element in newspaper and periodical wholesale distribution, dominated by the historic and vast firm of W. H. Smith.

New Concentration

This, briefly, is the background to the present situation of which the central feature is the *Mirror* group's takeover bid for Odhams. The directors of Odhams have strongly advised their shareholders to reject the offer, with the inducement of raising their dividend to 37½ per cent if they do so. It is now admitted that the proposed Thomson-Odhams merger (in fact a Thomson takeover) was a defensive move by the Odhams chiefs who appear to have regarded Roy Thomson as a lesser evil than Cecil King. Why should the *Mirror* wish to take over Odhams and be prepared to offer the high price (in shares) of nearly £33 million, representing a formidable capital inflation—55s. each for Odhams' shares, priced at 32s.?

Though there are important newspapers involved they are not the main concern; the real business lies in magazines. Concentration in the magazine and periodical field has advanced apace in the last couple of years. The *Mirror* group entered the field by buying the old Amalgamated Press (renamed Fleetway) from Lord Camrose and the Berry family. Odhams, already very large operators in the field, made themselves easily the biggest of all by acquiring their principal rivals, Newnes, and also the major part of the old Hulton Press (renamed Longacre).

Thus there is already a polarisation in the magazine field into two powerful groups, *Mirror-Fleetway* and *Odhams-Newnes*. Between them they own and publish some 300 magazines and periodicals. But the most paying stuff, both actual and potential, lies on the Odhams side of the line, typified in their ownership (through the Newnes deal) of all four colour-gravure women's weeklies, said to be read by all women in the country over the age of sixteen. The lush payoff in this field can be gauged from the fact that *Woman* alone grosses £112,000 a week in advertising revenue. It seems that Odhams, paying just over £12 million for Newnes, had a much better buy than the *Mirror* when it paid £18 million for Fleetway, which is known to be proving a growing threat to the buoyancy of *Mirror*-group profits.

Here, then, is ample motive for the *Mirror* takeover bid. It would give Mr. King and his associates a virtual monopoly of magazine-publishing in this country, providing them (as they say) with "substantial benefits" and permitting "substantial economies"—a phrase of grim portent for the jobs of journalists and printers and the choices of the reader, little softened by the qualification which relates it to savings on promotion and publicity.¹ The 300 publications mentioned above include some seventy—thirty-five a side—which compete with each other and may thus be considered potential victims of the rationalisation process that is likely to be attempted. There is at least as much circulation and financial instability in the magazine as in the newspaper field and in recent years a number of well-known titles have vanished (*Picture Post*, *Lilliput*, *Illustrated*, *Answers*, *The Sketch*).

¹ The *Daily Mirror* takeover circular to Odhams' shareholders stresses the possibility of reducing the promotion expenditure to "more reasonable proportions," adding, significantly, that "by producing a closer-knit framework for operations in the magazine field further economies should be possible." It is, on the other hand, true that the promotion expenditure of the great groups, particularly in the tense field of the women's magazines, has become ruinous—an astonishing comment on the gross wastefulness of capitalist competition. This squandering on promotion is said to have reached the level of £4 million a year. (*The Times* City column, February 9, 1961.)

But while the magazine monopoly is Mr. King's main aim the Mirror-Odhams takeover operation is of broader significance. It would produce a gigantic newspaper and periodical concern with assets of close on £100 million, far and away the largest in this country or for that matter in the capitalist world. By merging the two largest press groups it would reduce the six dominant groups to five. It would have a particular effect on the future of the Odhams-operated *Daily Herald*.

The Main Groups

To fill out the picture at this stage a short survey of the six dominant groups is necessary. With their assets in £ millions, these groups are Mr. King's Mirror-Pictorial group (57.9), Odhams Press (40.2), Thomson Newspapers (26.5), Lord Rothermere's Associated Newspapers (19.9), Beaverbrook Newspapers (11.4), News of the World (9.6). Three of the groups control over two-thirds of the total daily-paper circulation of the country, a sufficient answer to Mr. Macmillan's soothing syrup in the Commons about the country's 150 daily and Sunday papers "with considerable diversity of ownership". Four of them—Mirror, Thomson, Associated, News of the World—have heavy investments in the fabulous field of commercial television, with its annual advertising revenue of £78 million (and still rising). Individually the groups and their chiefs may be characterised as follows:

Mirror-Pictorial: chairman Cecil Harmsworth King, nephew of Northcliffe and first cousin of Lord Rothermere (Winchester and Oxford). As advertising manager of the *Mirror* in the 1930's King was responsible, with art manager Harry G. Bartholomew—whom he ousted from the chairmanship in 1951—for its transformation into the super-tabloid with the largest daily circulation in the country, now exceeding 4,600,000. The companion *Sunday Pictorial*, at 5,500,000, is in the top three "popular" Sundays.

In recent years King has taken significant steps away from the demagogic "leftism" for which the *Mirror* was famous. The masthead slogan "Forward with the People" was dropped. The left Labour columnist Crossman has given way to the right Labour columnist Woodrow Wyatt. "Whenever circulation has been in straight conflict with ideals, circulation has won. ... Perhaps 'Forward with the Shareholders' would have been a more durable slogan than 'Forward with the People'" (*The Observer*, November 1st, 1959).

In addition to the immensely profitable *Mirror* and *Pictorial* the group owns Fleetway Publications as stated above, is in I.T.V., has a controlling interest in the £58 million Reed Paper Group, and owns the Glasgow *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail*.

King is the pioneer of the new "newspaper imperialism", starting in West Africa (the Mirror group owns the leading daily papers in Ghana and Nigeria) and now branching out into the Caribbean (acquiring the British Guiana *Graphic* group, Georgetown's largest daily and Sunday papers).

The Holborn sky-scraper of the *Mirror-Pictorial*, the building and equipping of which has cost around £10 million, is the biggest and most modern newspaper establishment extant.

It has often been said that Sir John Ellerman, the multi-millionaire shipping magnate, is largely interested in the *Mirror* group; if so, he must lurk behind the dozen or so anonymous bank nominee holders who account for several millions of shares in the two main companies (Daily Mirror Newspapers and Sunday Pictorial Newspapers).

Odhams Press: chairman Sir Christopher Chancellor (Eton and Cambridge), former head of Reuters and before the war that arch-establishment news-agency's Far Eastern manager—a recent importation into the largely accountant-run hierarchy of the concern built up primarily as big printers, only secondarily as newspaper and periodical publishers, by that archetype of the suburban "little man" the late Lord Southwood.

In addition to the great Long Acre and Watford printing works—Watford is the largest and most advanced colourgravure plant in the country—the Odhams-Newnes group rates a score of companies and 215 magazines and periodicals. Its newspapers are the *Daily Herald*, *Sporting Life* (daily) and *The People*.

There is no dominant holding of Odhams' shares but substantial blocks are held by eight bank nominees and a number of institutional investors, notably large insurance companies (Prudential, Pearl, London Assurance, Refuge).

Thomson Newspapers: chairman Roy Thomson, the Canadian radio and newspaper proprietor, whose first appearance on the British press stage was his acquisition of the Edinburgh *Scotsman*, followed by the former Kemsley chain (the *Sunday Times*, the first "heavy" Sunday to top the million sale, with a dozen provincial morning, evening and Sunday papers). Owns Scottish Television, which he has described as "a licence to print your own money".

With his string of Canadian and American local dailies his total score is eighty-five newspapers, and he is reputed to wish to reach the century. While he presents himself as a pure money-maker who gives his editors freedom, providing their papers pay, he is personally Tory and his immediate entourage strongly tainted with Buchmanism. His No. 2, James Coltart, is a leading M.R.A. advocate, and

there are signs of this fanatical anti-Communist outlook penetrating Thomson editorial offices; the activities of the M.R.A. editor of one Thomson provincial evening are well known to me.

Thomson, who recently closed his Sunday *Empire News* and *Sunday Graphic*, is known to be anxious to buy himself into the national daily-paper field, and has made more than one offer; so this may have been one of his motives in his proposed deal with Odhams. He and his family hold 58 per cent of the ordinary shares of Thomson Newspapers. He has followed King into the West African field.

Associated Newspapers: chairman Lord Rothermere, son of founder Northcliffe's younger brother and partner. Rothermere heads the Newspaper Proprietors' Association (the powerful body representing the Fleet Street dailies and Sundays) and directed the coup by which his traditionally Tory group made the largest meal out of the corpses of the *News Chronicle* and *The Star*; the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News* respectively added 700,000 and 350,000 to their circulations.

While the other two Associated nationals, the *Daily Sketch* and *Sunday Dispatch*, have ailing circulations, the group's finances have long been among the most sound in the business. There is a big newsprint interest of long standing (Anglo-Newfoundland Development Ltd.), a 37½ per cent holding in Southern Television, and the ownership of Northcliffe Newspapers, a chain of provincial evenings in Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Derby, Hull, Grimsby, Lincoln, Leicester, Scunthorpe, Stoke and Swansea.

Beaverbrook Newspapers: chairman Max Aitken, heir of the founder Lord Beaverbrook (but despite the nominal retirement of that eccentric Tory octogenarian his remains the controlling voice). In recent years the aged autocrat has been ruthlessly axing the men who made his colossal fortune, e.g. Christiansen, the editorial architect of the *Daily Express*, still the leading broadsheet morning with over 4,250,000 circulation.

The *Sunday Express*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Evening Citizen* (Glasgow), with some smaller periodical and book interests, make up the publications of this highly-personal press lordship, noted for its political irresponsibility and lack of basic political influence (the "There Will be No War This Year" streamer of 1939 and the "Tories in by 100 Seats" streamer on the eve of polling day in 1945).

The magnitude of the group's operations is attested by its 1960 figures—a turnover of over £35 million and an advertisement revenue of nearly £18 million.

News of the World: chairman Sir William Carr, this is the smallest of the six great groups, but im-

portant as the publishers of the peculiar institution which, though well down from its peak circulation of nearly 8,500,000 still has (at nearly 6,700,000) the largest Sunday sale. The *News of the World* absorbed Thomson's *Empire News* in 1960.

The group also owns sporting and television journals (including the daily *Greyhound Express*) and the Berrows concern in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, with two evenings and a string of weeklies. It has a 25 per cent holding in Television Wales and West and a 90 per cent holding in Bemroses of Derby and Liverpool, the third largest colourgravure printers, recently extended to the point of surplus capacity.

Ownership of Bemroses was the obvious reason for a bid by Sir William to buy Newnes (he was heavily outbid by Odhams) and—since large Bemrose printing contracts are due to end this year—is no doubt connected with talks he has been having with King in the light of the Mirror-Odhams takeover bid.

Independents

Despite their dominance in capital resources and circulation the six groups do not, of course, cover the whole of the newspaper field. Three further categories can be distinguished for our present purpose:

(1) *The independent "class" or "quality" papers*: it is unnecessary to characterise *The Times*, the traditional and still supreme ruling-class organ. Its principal proprietors continue to be the Astor family, who also control *The Observer* (now printed by *The Times*). Circulation of *The Observer* has more than trebled since the start of the war and it runs second to the million-sale *Sunday Times*. Now the Berry brothers—the second Lord Camrose and his brother Michael—have added a *Sunday Telegraph* to their immensely successful *Daily Telegraph* they inherited from their father, who proved that a heavy paper with a Tory party line, more acid than that of almost any other Tory paper, could soar well over the million mark and make bounding profits. The Berrys provided themselves with the necessary base for their new Sunday by terminating their contract with Thomson for printing the *Sunday Times* (an old fraternal arrangement between the first Camrose and Kemsley), thus forcing Thomson into the capital expenditure mentioned earlier in this article. Their proclaimed aim is to make inroads into the circulation of both the "heavy" and the "popular" Sundays by a species of middle-of-the-road appeal.

Coming up strongly in this category is *The Guardian*, the "Manchester" dropped from its title and national in its aspirations. Though hampered in London and the south by its Manchester printing

and the consequent earliness of the edition, its circulation has climbed steadily since its first major typographical re-dress in 1952 and now stands at 212,000 (compared with not more than 60,000 before the war).

C. P. Scott's descendants continue to direct the paper, whose soured cold-war "liberalism" is well known. It is interesting that it has now established a link with Thomson, through a joint company (North News Ltd.), whose initial motive was to safeguard Thomson's not - too - strong *Evening Chronicle* by associating with *The Guardian's* highly-profitable companion the *Manchester Evening News*. Thomson is expected, in return, to undertake the printing of the forthcoming London edition of *The Guardian* at his extended Grays Inn Road plant. A late London *Guardian* may prove a serious competitor for *The Times*.

(2) *Provincial groupings*: most important is the Westminster Press, associated with the Cowdray-Pearson oil and other interests, linked with the *Financial Times* and *The Economist* and publishing dailies in Barrow, Bath, Bradford, Darlington, Oxford, Shields, Swindon and York, with a string of weeklies scattered all over the country. Provincial Newspapers have evenings in Edinburgh, Leeds, Preston and Northampton, a South London weekly group and (through the Argus Press) a couple of Surrey weekly series and over a score of lesser magazines and trade papers; their chairman, H. C. Drayton, is a substantial City financier.

Other groupings are more compact geographically, like the Harmsworth group (another branch of the famous family) which effectively controls the daily and weekly field in Devon and Cornwall, the three *Evening Echoes* (Bournemouth, Southampton, Weymouth), the East Midland Allied Press (an evening and a string of weeklies in Lincs, Northants and East Anglia).

(3) *City groupings*: the typical picture here is the associated morning and evening in a large provincial town, substantial and profitable local capitalist concerns in their own right, and usually rigidly Tory. Examples are—Birmingham (*Post, Mail, Despatch*), Leeds (*Yorkshire Post, Evening Post*), Liverpool (*Post, Echo*), Nottingham (*Guardian-Journal, Evening News, Evening Post*), Norwich (*Eastern Daily Press, Evening News*), Glasgow (*Herald, Evening Times*).

The Position of the "Herald"

The cursory picture now given of the British press, with the biggest battalions deploying for the "Passchendaele" forecast by *The Observer*, pinpoints the precarious and pitiful position of the *Daily Herald*. The T.U.C. minority interest in the *Herald* ceased to have any practical meaning with

the license agreement of 1957, carried further by the agreement of 1960, which made it finally Odhams' own. The *Herald* is one of Odhams' newspaper properties and thus part of the stock-in-trade for any takeover deals. Initially there was no pretence of informing, let alone consulting, the T.U.C. directors of the nominally continuing, but quite shadowy and unreal, Odhams-T.U.C. joint company, the *Daily Herald* (1929) Ltd.

Thus the only daily press voice to which British social democracy can lay any claim is cynically banded about from one takeover tycoon to another. Who'll buy Odhams' make-weight, the poor relation of the prosperous *People*? Will it be the Tory Thomson (Gaitskell & Co. seem to regard him as a lesser evil, though he is an expert in closures) or the opportunist King? Will it be some other buyer—perhaps Sir William Carr of the *News of the World*, who has publicly stated that he has discussed with King buying the *Herald* and *People* if the Mirror-Odhams takeover eventuates (his interest in his biggest Sunday competitor is obvious, his interest in a Labour daily much less obvious)?

King is known not to be seriously interested in the *Herald* if he can find a suitable purchaser. With its circulation of just on 1,500,000—it only managed to get about a tenth of the *Mail's* pickings from the *Chronicle's* corpse—the *Herald* is still non-viable, in capitalist terms; the loss on its publication is said to be of the order of £750,000 a year. King's attitude is plain. No one can give a pledge never to close the *Herald* down, he says ("the losses of a paper doing badly are astronomical"); but "if it comes our way we shall throw in everything we have in making a success of the *Herald*. If we can't make a success of it—and Odhams can't—I do not think anybody can".

But whether it is King or another or still Odhams the problem of the *Herald* remains; and it is not a problem of a period of seven years for investment and promotion on the usual big business scale. An editor from the heart of *The Guardian* Establishment and the Nuffield Foundation (John Beavan)—we are told by *The Observer* that "on principle he dislikes the outdated working-class brand image"—is not the answer, nor are all the typographical improvements and hiring of former *Chronicle* writers and colour-printing gimmicks. The paper damns itself because it continues the rigid right-wing course it has pursued for the whole of its thirty years with Odhams. It is "committed to Gaitskell and the bomb" (*The Observer*, February 5th, 1961) when the democratic decisions of the Labour movement run precisely the other way.

A world should be said here about the parallel position of *Reynolds News*—parallel in the sense that the policy question is the central one, not in the sense of ownership or operation, since *Reynolds*

is the property of the Co-operative movement. *Reynolds'* decline from over 700,000 circulation ten years ago to a mere 330,000 in 1961 (and even that is an increase of some 15,000 on its lowest ebb) accompanied its acceptance of the official right-wing line, including the policy of bans and proscriptions. This was symbolised in the sacking, some years ago, of its left deputy editor, Gordon Schaffer, chairman of the British Peace Committee.

When the "new" *Reynolds* was launched before the war, with Communists in leading positions on its staff, and it developed the famous United Peace Alliance policy, circulation bounded up from 290,000 to 500,000 (figures that have to be related to the much lower average circulations of those days). Now, if it were not for its lucrative contract with Lord Rothermere for machining part of the editions of the *Evening News*, *Reynolds* would be in a parlous state indeed.

A Prime Issue for Labour

The entire affair has brought the press to the centre of the political stage and made it a prime issue for the whole Labour movement. The reaction of the workers immediately affected has been strong, both at union executive and editorial office and print-shop floor level. The Printing and Kindred Trades Federation and the individual unions have unanimously pledged their full strength—which is, of course, immense in the closed shops concerned—to fight against redundancy and preserve employment. The federated chapels of the Mirror and Odhams groups have spontaneously come together in an action committee to oppose takeovers by all means, including strike action; there is a wave of mass activity—meetings, deputations, the issue of a broadsheet, lobbying of M.P.s.

Politically it is interesting to observe the total bankruptcy of all the orthodox commentators, whether Tory or Labour. The *Daily Telegraph* laments that the laws of economics cannot be changed. The *New Statesman* finds the situation "obscure" and thinks that the main questions of newspaper economics cannot "at present be clearly answered". The *Observer* suggests some sort of permanent advisory commission on mass communications (though they do add: "how many papers a nation of this size should have it is impossible to say. But the minimum required is that they should together express all the main political opinions (including Communist) and should cater for all important local interests and minorities").

It is noteworthy that in all these comments there is a growing tendency to drag in the supposed "restrictive practices" of the printing unions as a major factor, which is only succumbing to the anti-union propaganda of the egregious Edward Martell and his anti-socialist *New Daily*. And it is hardly

accidental that one of the earliest reactions to the news of the Government's appointment of a new Royal Commission on the press came from Martell. "We are delighted," he said. "It is what we have been agitating for. We shall be able to give our view of restrictive practices in the newspaper industry."

The Press Commission is the Macmillan Government's device for sidestepping the whole takeover and press monopoly issue. In announcing it the Prime Minister specifically refused to intervene in the Odhams affair. Royal Commissions are the classic British procedure for shelving urgent issues; the most speedy forecast for this one is an interim report in six months and a final report in a year. What may the monopoly positions be by then?

The terms of reference of the new Commission are significantly different from those of its predecessor of 1947-49, which inquired into "finance, control, management and ownership". The key terms now are "the economic and financial factors affecting production and sale", including "(a) manufacturing, printing, distribution and other costs; (b) efficiency of production; (c) advertising and other revenue, including any revenue derived from interests in television". Excluded are (1) the general question of the relationship of the press and television, referred to the Pilkington Committee on broadcasting, (2) the financial procedure in takeovers, referred to the Jenkins Committee on company law.

For the working-class movement in general, and for Communists in particular, the trend of developments rams home the need for the only independent daily paper today. How heartily we can endorse the editorial in our own paper—"in all this jungle of takeover bids, mergers and monopolies only one daily independent voice of the Labour movement is left. It is more urgent than ever to extend the sale of the *Daily Worker*—the only paper which supports the Scarborough Labour Party Conference decisions, which fights for all workers threatened by unemployment, which stands for the millions against the millionaires" (*Daily Worker*, January 26th, 1961). We can note such signs of trade union opinion as the letter in the official organ of the Typographical Association, largest of the craft unions in print, where the writer, in the light of the takeovers, says to his colleagues, "we owe it to ourselves to read the one daily newspaper that owes allegiance to no business group or industrial concern—the *Daily Worker*" (*Typographical Circular*, February 1961, pp. 32-33). Finally, we have an unexampled opportunity to develop the more fundamental line of our Party's *British Road to Socialism*, where the picture is unfolded of a press taken out of the hands of the millionaire monopolists and "transferred to national and local democratic organisations".

Gaitskell's Campaign

Ivor Montagu

THE present high-powered and high-financed campaign of Mr. Gaitskell against his own side (the only one that he and his cronies appear to know how to wage) on the Scarborough Defence Policy is entirely against Aunt Sallys, issues of his own choosing and imagining, that have nothing to do with the case. Secure in the knowledge that press, radio and TV monopolies will combine to prevent those they malign from answering back, these courageous crusaders take care in their attacks invariably to misrepresent the views and policy they are attacking.

To blur the issue and confuse the problem, they appear to think gives them their best chance.

First Pink-Red Herring is the artificial issue of counterposing unilateralism to multilateralism. To pretend that Scarborough raises any issue in *this form* is utterly unscrupulous or utterly crazy.

The Scarborough position on the matter is crystal clear. There is no excuse for any honest misunderstanding on this point in the terms of the two resolutions (A.E.U. and T. & G.W.U.) whose adoption by the majority at Scarborough they, the self-appointed knights of "democratic socialism", believe themselves entitled to disregard.

The A.E.U. resolution: "*. . . the Government should press for an international agreement on complete disarmament, and in the meantime . . . the unilateral renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling and basing of all nuclear weapons in Great Britain.*"

The T. & G.W.U. resolution: "*. . . complete rejection of any defence policy based on the threat of the use of strategic or tactical nuclear weapons; permanent cessation of manufacture or testing of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons; patrols of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and operating from British bases ceasing forthwith; continuation of the opposition to the establishment of missile bases in Great Britain . . . pressing for the reopening of discussion between nations at the earliest possible moment as the means by which world disarmament and peaceful coexistence can be most readily achieved.*"

Our italics. The italicised words should put the matter beyond question. Yet still Mr. Gaitskell's clique demands: "Multilateralist or unilateralist?" with all the schoolboyish glee at imaginarily stumping their opponents exhibited by practitioners of the hoary heckle "Have you stopped beating your

wife?" Dishonest or just dumb?¹ The real position is, of course, that the question cannot be put as an alternative, and the attempt to do so is merely cheap and phoney. The answer to it cannot be put in one word, any more than the answer to the classic catch. The answer, of course, is, as clearly and specifically stated in both Scarborough resolutions: International negotiation and agreement for disarmament (so-called multilateralism) is clearly demanded. British action now, renouncing the testing, stocking and manufacturing of nuclear weapons, finishing with foreign nuclear bases and with the whole nuclear strategy, is not only vital in itself as a measure of self-defence. Such action could be decisive in throwing Britain's weight into the scales for international disarmament negotiations. This is a consistent case.

There is no unilateralist who is not also a multilateralist—this goes for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, for the Communist Party, for the British Peace Committee, and for anyone else. That is to say he wants to get rid of all nuclear weapons from possession of all countries. But while Mr. Gaitskell and his supporters pay lip service to "multilateralism", their policy of the cold war, N.A.T.O. and nuclear strategy makes real international negotiation impossible. World disarmament depends on the fight to end the cold war and the whole nuclear strategy.

Mr. Gaitskell, at Scarborough, fished another very large Pink-Red Herring out of the ditch in his famous McCarthyite outburst against "pacifists, unilateralists, fellow-travellers". It is true that the number of his opponents include some who regard the use of nuclear weapons as, in all circumstances, morally wrong. (There are some who think this of any weapon at all, and it is natural that their number should be rather greater when it is a question of the use of a weapon that, of its nature, is inevitably injurious to innumerable innocent people.) Perhaps it is not stretching a term to abuse such, not unreasonably, squeamish persons as "pacifists". By "fellow-travellers", in this

¹ When they show themselves playing this game in close-up on the telly, the long fanatic stare, the injured querulousness, the dandy self-content, it really does seem sometimes that perhaps Mr. Gaitskell and his friends do not understand what the Defence Debate is all about. But this is better left to their psychiatrists. Politicians must be presumed responsible, whether they be so or no.

context, Mr. Gaitskell is no doubt thinking of those whose objection to nuclear weapons is influenced by their judgment that the Soviet Union is not really lusting to attack these islands. The term is perhaps a little exaggerated, for this is a judgment that, as their public pronouncements indicate, is shared by, among others, Harold Macmillan and Field-Marshal Montgomery.

However, the whole purpose of the diatribe is to distract attention from the fact that persons quite outside these categories raise the question whether the basing of nuclear weapons on these islands can possibly contribute to their security and may not indeed, in the present situation, itself constitute their chief peril.

For Britain to use these weapons, or for anyone to use these weapons from Britain, would mean mass suicide. There is no defence whatever against them (the existence of a so-called Civil Defence is a mere dishonest device—in which the Gaitskell leadership are full accomplices—to deceive the public by pretending the contrary). The threat of their use by a British Government has no strategic significance; it is nothing more than a chest-drumming exercise. Nuclear weapons delivery from these islands must inevitably therefore be, as in fact it is now, under foreign (American) control and command.

In Whose Interest?

It is inconceivable that orders for such delivery could ever be given in British interests, for it could never be in British interest to invite the inevitable immediate reply. It could only ever conceivably be ordered by the alien (American) controller in his interest, in the expectation that the initial reply to missiles from Britain would, of tactical necessity, be directed against the sites used, and so gain a short time before any blow against American sites. Even for the most pertinacious devotee of the "free-world" concept, the devout believer in the moral, historical, financial² identity of interest between American capitalists and British capitalists, it is hard to see the strategic, tactical or common-sense advantage of making Britain such a first-strike base for missiles delivery—of making into a front-line, priority target, an island that by its small size and density of population is the most vulnerable target area for nuclear devastation on the entire surface of the globe.

All these facts, and they are facts, have nothing whatever to do with pacifism or "fellow-travelling." They are recognised, and even mentioned

² Despite certain economic disadvantages—hard to blink—resulting from the latest Kennedy exports drive.

in public, by such unpacific characters as top British military chiefs. They are simply a matter of plain, ordinary common-sense applied to national defence. And it is Mr. Gaitskell's crime (or sheer stupidity), that out of injured vanity and *amour-propre* he seeks to turn the issue from this plane to cheap McCarthy name-calling.

There is no military reason to involve Britain in nuclear bases, but there is a strong political one. The tighter the military machines of Britain and its N.A.T.O. allies can be integrated, the more difficult it becomes for Britain to have a separate foreign policy or to develop any separate political initiative. Rocket emplacements, Polaris bases, bomber airfields, everything down to automatic rifles and cartridges carefully integrated—what chance of breaking loose? *The Economist* (December 24, 1960) sees the drive for N.A.T.O. nuclear integration as "a strong sentiment among Americans, who see that involvement as a cement which will set harder and harder as the years pass."

N.A.T.O. Is Not Collective Security

Here we reach the next Pink-Red Herring, diversion from the real issue of N.A.T.O. Here the Gaitskell gang formulate their next false alternative: "Neutralism or collective security?" They ascend from the abuse of McCarthy to the jargon of Foster Dulles. Their opponents are "neutralists." The value they give to this word is to pretend their opponents Pilates, seeking to withdraw into some modern version of isolationism, avoid "entangling alliances," concerned only to leave nuclear weapons with their implicit moral problems to others and keep their own skirts clean. As though the nuclear disarmers were fools enough to suppose you could wash your own hands clean of fall-out in a nuclear holocaust! But this is not the only, or even the major, fallacy in this false antithesis. The worst is the pretence that collective security and N.A.T.O. have anything in common. There has been nothing to parallel it but Hitler's calling the movement he established to crush the German working class in the interest of German Big Business "National Socialism". For N.A.T.O. has nothing whatsoever to do with collective security and is its very opposite, specifically barred by the United Nations Charter.

Collective security is an agreement among the nations, in the whole world or in a given area, that any one among them committing aggression against any of the others shall be dealt with collectively. There are no exceptions. And there are naturally conversations among all of them on how to deal most effectively with any breach arising.

That N.A.T.O. is not of this character is shown by its composition, its history and everything

about it. The U.S.S.R. proposed to join N.A.T.O., offering to participate if its real purpose were to ensure the peace of Europe. It was refused. The U.S.S.R. offered that the Warsaw Pact should be dissolved, and N.A.T.O. at the same time, and the nations of both, that is *all* the European nations willing to do so, should instead unite in a single security system to preserve the peace of Europe. It was refused. Indeed so naked is N.A.T.O. that its members from time to time even forget their peaceful protestations, recognisably designate the "enemy" in training, manoeuvres, indoctrinations and laws.

The object of N.A.T.O. is not to protect its members against a Soviet attack, for which purpose it would be inadequate and in which, in any case, nobody believes. It is to tie its members hog-bound politically, so that whatever policies may be developed under its banner, and however distasteful these may be to the peoples of its constituent members, the protesting struggles of these will be feeble in the face of the magic incantation, and they will be carried, willy-nilly, along. And what is this political policy?

The German Military Machine

The resurrection of the German military machine, the re-establishment of militarism and reaction throughout Germany—contrary to the Potsdam Agreement between the Allies—the recruitment of Germany (it has only worked so far in Western Germany but the proclaimed policy of the N.A.T.O. group is to extend the incorporation if possible to the whole) once more as an armed gendarme against the socialist world. As a N.A.T.O. partner, West Germany has seen one by one each prohibition imposed at the end of the last war breached and dissolved. As a N.A.T.O. partner, West Germany has rearmed, recovered air force, warships, tanks, a huge arms industry, and is to be armed with nuclear weapons; the judges are those who sentenced anti-fascists to death, the police those who hounded and tortured victims when they served the Gestapo, the military chiefs those who carried out Hitler's invasions and committed war crimes; the Government bans the Communists, as Hitler did; it prosecutes peace organisations, as Hitler did; it makes it a crime to have been a victim of fascism and Government spokesmen, even up to Adenauer himself, demand the incorporation of territories belonging to the German Democratic Republic (refusing any negotiations for unification), U.S.S.R., Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and Denmark, indeed every neighbour.

Not one word of the mildest dissent does this

elicit at any time from the Tory Establishment in Britain. It even sets itself out to popularise and whitewash German militarism in the eyes of the British people as a preliminary to handing over British islands and enclaves for training German troops. Royalty is brought into play to chide the unbeliever through Prince Philip; the cinema—to teach us that von Braun, when he blew us up, was but a hero toying with the stars; and TV—to show us Leni Riefenstahl, the protégée of Hitler, as a misunderstood artist.

All this is perfectly comprehensible in the Tories. After all it is exactly what they did after 1914. It was the Tory Governments of the day that connived in the rearmament of Germany despite the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, and the Tory gentlemen knew perfectly well the expansionist aims openly proclaimed by Hitler, as well as the tortures and murders inflicted upon his opponents in concentration camps (after all, the imprisoned and persecuted were, then as now, only pacifists or working class), when they sat down to dine and wine with his criminal gang. They are only returning to their vomit. And the ties between the American business circles that lobby the Government and the German business circles that manipulated the Nazis have always been close. Kennedy's father, the London Ambassador, had a nest of Nazi spies in his embassy. The Foster Dulles law firm represented Hitler's Government as its official agent, and Allen Dulles could not wait for the end of the war to negotiate with his Nazi opposite number in Switzerland. But what is Gaitskell doing, supporting all these goings on?

The Tories knew no better—as the U.S. State Department later in a different situation knew no better: their policy, by inclination and temperament rather than by reason, has always been to strengthen their opposite numbers in any country, regardless of criminal record or potentiality, as a means to halt infectious social change. It didn't pay well between the wars: Hitler turned out to be a sort of sorcerer's apprentice and turned on his sponsors. The new disaster ahead can be different. Added to the obvious dangers of war started by accident, error or madness, is the already acute and ever-growing peril resulting from inextricable military integration with the partisans of brinkmanship, American generals who openly propound the theory of "limited war", West German generals who plan again (as they did for Hitler) a quick blitz over the frontiers combined with reliance on a threat of a nuclear action to prevent a counter-blow, West German statesmen who refuse to recognise the post-war frontiers and negotiate coexistence with the German Demo-

cratic Republic, and Allied (American-British-French, etc.) statesmen who encourage their dreams by refusing to negotiate a settled frontier and a German Peace Treaty. That, not collective security, is N.A.T.O.

Unilateralism Is Not Neutralism

This is where the biggest Pink-Red Herring of all comes in. We have made clear that unilateralism for Britain in respect to nuclear weapons is not an alternative to international negotiations or multilateralism, but an addition, a *meanwhile*, essential to the defence of Britain from the especial danger in which it, alone and above all other N.A.T.O. partners, has totally unnecessarily been placed by the stationing here of American and N.A.T.O. nuclear forces and nuclear bases. There is also an *in order to*. The Scarborough defence policy by no means lost sight of this aspect either. It will not have escaped the perspicacious that in extracting the relevant parts of the A.E.U. and T. & G.W.U. resolutions earlier on, phrases were omitted. It is these passages that are important now. The A.E.U.: "The only defence for Britain is for the settlement of international differences by negotiation and a spirit of toleration between the nations and an understanding that countries with different social systems can and must live with each other." The T. & G.W.U.: "A strengthening of the United Nations organisation, including the admission of the Chinese People's Republic with a view to the creation of a new world order and the avoidance of a return to the methods of the cold war period."

This is not "neutralism", this is not the policy of N.A.T.O., or of the U.S. State Department or of the cold war. It is something entirely different, it is a positive policy for peace. In this context, the argument about N.A.T.O., based on its supposed military qualities, is seen at once as an irrelevant digression, a deliberate diversion from the essential task. The point is not N.A.T.O.'s military provisions—which in fact do not protect but create dangers—it is its operation as a political strait-jacket. While Britain remains the prisoner of N.A.T.O., it can have no independent foreign policy, it can engage in no initiative toward changing the climate, it can make no move toward either general disarmament or a German settlement. Contrary to Bevan's vision of a Britain naked in the conference chamber without N.A.T.O. and the bomb, Britain, even with its outmoded bomb, is, with N.A.T.O., in the conference chamber bound and even dumb. Has there ever been humiliation so complete for a British political initiative as the fate of the Macmillan agreement with Khrushchov to a non-aggression pact and a

demilitarised zone in Europe,³ in fact the complete disappearance of both from the diplomatic agenda because Adenauer forbade them?

It is this situation that casts a lurid light on the pretended Gaitskell enthusiasm for *multilateralism*. There has sometimes been in certain quarters a tendency to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, not for hard-headed reasons of national defence and security, which are compelling, or moral reasons, which must be respected, but out of a certain despair, on the ground that multilateralism can never be achieved. This pessimism only postpones success in achieving worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons, since it distracts attention from the true obstacles that must be overcome.

Who are the false friends of multilateralism? In certain quarters allegiance to multilateral abolition of nuclear weapons is only proclaimed in order to make respectable sabotage of the spreading need for Britain, in any case, to get out from under. There is an unbroken record of insincerity in this respect from the right-wing manipulators of Labour leadership, to which Gaitskell himself is only the heir. The official policy of the Western Allies, and the Labour Government, at the time of the Stockholm Appeal, was multilateral nuclear disarmament, but when the World Peace Council called for it in that Appeal, its advocates in Britain were expelled from the Labour Party and its supporters abroad driven back from British ports and airfields by the Labour Home Secretary.

When the Margate Conference of the Labour Party endorsed multilateral abolition of nuclear weapons by a huge majority (to defeat a resolution calling for a British initiative), Gaitskell called for this life and death campaign a total of exactly one public meeting (in Trafalgar Square), then relapsed into silence. Under pressure two years ago, Gaitskell (at a time when it was still possible to imagine that Britain could have its own nuclear deterrent and it was still also Tory policy) agreed to give up the British-made bomb *if* no nation other than U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. made one. Dare he take the witness stand and say on oath he did not then already well know (what everyone else knew) that owing to de Gaulle's determination this *if* would relieve him of that promise? Last year he argued as concession that while Britain must keep in N.A.T.O., and N.A.T.O. keep the bomb, he would ask for civilian control, and a share in control, over any decision to use it. Is he really such an idiot as not to know that this is totally impractical and any pretence to the

³ The proposal was originally made by Eden, so it had been endorsed by two British Prime Ministers.

contrary as much of a confidence trick as "Find the Lady"?⁴

Now there is talk of the "compromise" joint committee of the T.U.C. General Council, Labour Party National Executive and Shadow Cabinet, producing all kinds of concessions about a new policy, so long as it is clearly agreed that whatever happens Britain must remain in N.A.T.O. But here is the crux. Why on earth should Adenauer or the Pentagon agree to any new policy or new arrangement, so long as Britain's proposal of it is subject to the proviso that, in any case, the British Government will remain bound by their decisions? The issue is not N.A.T.O. or no N.A.T.O. The issue is a new policy and Britain to put it forward.

For, actually, international agreement on disarmament, not only nuclear, but general, and under the requisite control, is perfectly possible. It has never been so possible. There are no longer any technical obstacles. There have already been long and hard international discussions. Now sufficient is known. Any further deferment for "research" is a mere excuse for indefinite postponement. An equitable test stoppage, with equitable test control, *could* be signed tomorrow. U.S.S.R. is not the obstacle. Noel-Baker proposed, and de Gaulle picked up, the idea that the difficulty of checking complete elimination of nuclear weapons, as may be provided by any Treaty, could be obviated by complete elimination of any means of delivering them, by land, sea or air, by rocket, gun, airplane or vessel. U.S.S.R. has accepted this principle. It is not the obstacle.

Objections to multilateral elimination of nuclear weapons used to be raised by U.S.A. and Britain on the ground of fancied superiority of U.S.S.R. in military manpower, in "conventional forces." U.S.S.R. has put forward figures for reduction in military manpower greater than those desired by U.S.A. U.S.S.R. armies are not the obstacle.

The Western allies have made a fetish of their mistrust of U.S.S.R. and the necessity for control of any such measures agreed. The U.S.S.R. itself has put forward minutely detailed proposals for

control at every port, airfield, barracks, railway junction, arms factory. Control is not the obstacle.

There is—repeat—no technical obstacle to disarmament under strict control, neither to the elimination of the danger of nuclear weapons, nor equitably balanced first steps, nor steps as far as disarmament, total or general. The sole obstacle is political, the last stated (but never properly published) Western position of proposing the *implementation* of control measures before *even agreement* on measures of disarmament.

The Only Policy for Security

The political road to disarmament is marked perfectly clearly. But Britain will never get nearer to the end of it if it stops whenever so bidden by Adenauer or the alliance between the Pentagon and the U.S. arms lobby. That is the issue hidden behind Gaitskell's N.A.T.O. herring.

The Scarborough policy is the only possible policy for British security and defence, the only policy that frankly recognises facts, the only policy by which Britain can advance agreement on multilateral disarmament, with coexistence for peace replacing the cold war, to the benefit of the whole world.

Those only can oppose it who have abandoned all hope of British independence and are ready to accept Britain's future existence as a client state; who are ready to pay as price for their status and such measure of profit-making as may be allowed them as pensioner-dependents, the risk of Britain becoming strategically expendable in another's quarrel; who are desperate, for the sake of moneybags and privilege, at all cost to roll back socialism, and therefore are ready to follow German militarism into adventure, relying on brinkmanship to prevent local war from becoming all-out war.

Only these can oppose a British initiative for political settlements and for fair step-by-step multilateral disarmament, including nuclear, with measures meanwhile to take Britain out of the nuclear front line, whether anyone in N.A.T.O. likes it or not. That Tories will be found opposing it is only to be expected. "It may not be patriotic, but it seems only common sense," has always been the slogan of the class from which they come. But why on earth should the leader of the Labour Party oppose it? To save his face, because he is too deeply mired in the folly whose true nature time has already signally revealed, and too small to admit error?

⁴ "The more powerful the weapon, the more vital it is that its control should be at once politically responsible, capable of rapid exercise, free from the paralysis of a fifteen-fingers-on-the-trigger system, yet proof against military rashness. Such a Utopian formula will not easily be found, nor is there anything in the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty to supply it." (*Sunday Times*, December, 1960.)

A World Without a Hero

A Preliminary Comment on the Writings of C. P. Snow

Ron Willetts

How much of what we are is due to accidents of our class and time, and how much is due to something innate and unalterable within ourselves?—C. P. Snow.

In the twentieth century millions of deaths and mountains of guns, tanks, and ships are not enough to make a bourgeois hero.—Christopher Caudwell.

IT is only at a late stage in the evolution of human society that an individual human being becomes a major concern of literary art. Before that can happen, society has become class-society, private property is developing and, as Marx explained, "the exchange of commodities . . . develops a whole network of social relations spontaneous in their growth and entirely beyond the control of the actors." It was this kind of spontaneity of growth, independent of the nominally free human agent, transforming an action into its opposite and involving a reversal of fortune usually catastrophic, that Aristotle found so well exemplified by the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles. A ruler at the height of his prosperity and reputation is involved in ruin in consequence of his determination to uncover the truth about the past so as to relieve his people of a present affliction. Devoid of any moral blame, he was the victim of his human condition, involved in a chain of circumstances over which he had no control. If he had had more control, he would not have shared in the necessary imperfection of being human. No matter how privileged he may be in status and esteem, the tragic hero remains involved in this fundamental contradiction. In European literature the most profound symbol of the human situation is the tragic hero, from Oedipus to Faust. This symbolic figure, a means for the most searching analysis of the human personality, developed with the drama.

But the most dominant literary form of modern culture, since the rise of the bourgeoisie, is the novel. The novel is a much more flexible form, sometimes so flexible in its later development that it defies simple description. Yet, if we view the form in terms of its origins, we can see it as an artistic means of describing in impersonal terms an increasingly differentiated external reality. Its characters need no longer be symbolic figures drawn from mythology, history, legend. They are, in the great classical forms of the bourgeois novel, in Dickens, Balzac and Tolstoy, realistic

types. The possible range of these types becomes rapidly, enormously extended. The evolution of society has brought economic and political improvement to new social classes, bestowed the concepts of individualism, of personal responsibility, of the dream of freedom, as watchwords. The sphere of social life and private life becomes more sharply differentiated.

Yet, the greatest classical novelists are those who most successfully portrayed man as a social being, whose types of character are representative of the depth and richness, the diversity and complexity of the human personality, achieving a synthesis of private and general experience. It is no accident, however, that the great realist novels were written by men who could maintain their close connection with society, who were not merely professional writers. Increasing specialisation of labour since the mid-nineteenth century has forced most writers into the role of professional observers of the social scene. By the end of the nineteenth century, the "special problem" of the literary artist is becoming an obsession. The naturalist novel, the psychological novel and, at lower levels, the detective-novel and the novel of romantic escape in its various forms, reflect this increasing professionalism categorised in relation to the commercial market.

Scientist and Writer

C. P. Snow has been sometimes compared with Balzac. Since his work is unfinished, the comparison is premature. But in one sense at least he is related to his great classical predecessors, in having close personal links with the realities of social life. He is, for these days, a rare bird. For he emerged into prominence as a writer not from *avant-garde* literary circles. He was born in 1905, second of four sons of a lower-middle class family in Leicester. His grandfather left school at the age of ten, continued to educate himself and became a maintenance foreman in a tramway depot. His father worked in a boot-and-

shoe firm. "By training," he has explained, "I was a scientist: by vocation I was a writer. . . . It was a piece of luck, if you like, that arose through coming from a poor home." He had no option but to specialise in science in the sixth form of the grammar school he attended. He was later a laboratory assistant at the same school and studied for a university scholarship. After graduating from Leicester University College with First Class Honours in chemistry, he went to Cambridge to do research, and was elected to a Fellowship in 1930. While continuing his scientific research, he published two novels, the second anonymously. The first was a detective story, *Death Under Sail* (1932), the other a scientific fantasy, *New Lives for Old* (1933). At this time his career as a research scientist came to an end, through the failure of a piece of work on which he was engaged. But he continued to teach science at Cambridge. In 1939 he was appointed to a Royal Society Sub-Committee on the use of scientific manpower and in 1940 he joined the Ministry of Labour. In 1942 he became Director of Technical Personnel, Ministry of Labour. In 1944 he also became Director of Scientific Personnel at the English Electric Company and in 1947 joined its Board of Directors. After the war (1945) he became a Civil Service Commissioner with a special responsibility for scientific appointments. He was awarded a C.B.E. in 1943 and a knighthood in 1957.

This distinguished public servant, don, scientist, administrator, man of affairs, laid aside his writing during the war. But when he had abandoned scientific research he wrote his first serious novel, *The Search* (1934). On New Year's Day of the following year he first conceived the idea of a sequence of novels, the Lewis Eliot series, later to be called by the title of the first of the sequence—*Strangers and Brothers*. This first novel of the series was written and the general scheme outlined as the war came. In 1938, in a letter to his publishers, Snow formulated his literary purpose in the form of the question quoted at the beginning of this article. This is the problem he wanted to explore as a creative artist. It is the old fundamental question of the subject and the object, the individual and society. But the relationship between them is recognised. One aspect is not repudiated at the expense of another. There will be an attempt at an organic expression of the human personality functioning in society, an attempt on classical lines against the main literary currents of the times, a repudiation of the methods of Gide, Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence. Hence, "Snow,

like Balzac, reveals character against the background of society: but the structure of *Strangers and Brothers*, unlike that of *La Comédie Humaine*, is built upon the underlying personal theme or themes" (William Cooper, *C. P. Snow*, [London, 1959] p. 31, n. 1). This qualification, made by one of Snow's most sympathetic interpreters, is important and revealing.

The Two Cultures

But we can leave qualifications aside for the time being and acknowledge that such an attempt, seriously undertaken in these times, deserves the most careful attention. We are greatly helped in our study of Snow's imaginative work by the publication of his mature reflections on *The Two Cultures and The Scientific Revolution*¹. This work fully deserved all the attention it prompted from critics and commentators in this country and abroad. It clearly states the writer's fundamental attitudes to modern society and its problems.

"I believe," he writes, "the intellectual life of the whole of Western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. When I say the intellectual life, I mean to include also a large part of our practical life, because I should be the last person to suggest the two can at the deepest level be distinguished. . . . Two polar groups; at one pole we have the literary intellectuals, who incidentally while no one was looking took to referring to themselves as 'intellectuals' as though there were no others. . . . Literary intellectuals at one pole—at the other, scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension—sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding" (pp. 3-4).

He remembers being cross-examined by a distinguished scientist: "Why do most writers take on social opinions which would have been thought distinctly uncivilised and *démodé* at the time of the Plantagenets? Wasn't that true of most of the famous twentieth-century writers? Yeats, Pound, Wyndham Lewis, nine out of ten of those who have dominated literary sensibility in our time—weren't they not only politically silly, but politically wicked? Didn't the influence of all they represent bring Auschwitz that much nearer?"

He thought at the time, and still thinks, "that the correct answer was not to defend the indefensible. It was no use saying that Yeats, according to friends whose judgment I trust, was a man of singular magnanimity of character, as well as

¹ The Rede Lecture: Cambridge, 1959.

a great poet. It was no use denying the facts, which are broadly true. The honest answer was that there is, in fact, a connection, which literary persons were culpably slow to see, between some kinds of early twentieth-century art and the most imbecile expressions of anti-social feelings. That was one reason, among many, why some of us turned our backs on the art and tried to hack out a new or different way for ourselves" (pp. 7-8). (But in reality not so new or different, as I have pointed out above.)

The scientists, on the other hand, have an intensive culture of their own, whose links with the traditional culture are, in the main, tenuous. And, Snow argues, they have the future in their bones. "They may not like it, but they have it. That was as true of the conservatives J. J. Thomson and Lindemann as of the radicals Einstein or Blackett: as true of the Christian A. H. Compton as of the materialist Bernal: of the aristocrats Broglie or Russell as of the proletarian Faraday: of those born rich, like Thomas Merton or Victor Rothschild, as of Rutherford, who was the son of an odd-job handyman. Without thinking it, they respond alike. That is what a culture means" (p. 10).

If, he continues, the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist—illustrated by the comparison between Orwell's *1984* and Bernal's *World Without War*. "It is the traditional culture, to an extent remarkably little diminished by the emergence of the scientific one, which manages the Western world" (p. 11).

Snow emphasises the mutual impoverishment which results from this dichotomy, the practical, intellectual and creative loss.

Optimism

This part of his argument is prefaced by a passage refuting the common charge that scientists are shallowly optimistic, a passage which helps to clarify Snow's neo-classical standpoint and the tensions of his novels.

"First, about the scientists' optimism. This is an accusation which has been made so often that it has become a platitude. It has been made by some of the acutest non-scientific minds of the day. But it depends upon a confusion between the individual experience and the social experience, between the individual condition of man and his social condition. Most of the scientists I have known will have felt—just as deeply as the non-scientists I have known well—that the individual condition of each of us is tragic. Each of us is alone: sometimes we escape from solitariness, through love or affection or perhaps

creative moments, but those triumphs of life are pools of light we make for ourselves while the edge of the road is black: each of us dies alone. Some scientists I have known have had faith in revealed religion. Perhaps with them the sense of the tragic condition is not so strong. I don't know. With most people of deep feeling, however high-spirited and happy they are, sometimes most with those who are happiest and most high-spirited, it seems to be right in the fibres, part of the weight of life. That is as true of the scientists I have known best as of anyone at all.

"But nearly all of them—and this is where the colour of hope genuinely comes in—would see no reason why, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be. Each of us is solitary: each of us dies alone: all right, that's a fate against which we can't struggle—but there is plenty in our condition which is not fate, and against which we are less than human unless we do struggle" (pp. 5-6).

The remainder of the argument develops this theme of hope in the sphere of social experience. Industrialisation is the only hope of the poor: in any country where they have had the chance the poor have walked off the land into the factories as fast as the factories could take them. It is now technically possible to carry out the scientific revolution² in India, Africa, south-east Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, within fifty years. It is inexcusable for Western man to be unaware of this possibility, not to know that here lies the safeguard against the three dangers of H-bomb war, over-population, the gap between the rich and the poor. This gap between the rich and the poor countries will be removed. "If we are short-sighted, inept, incapable either of goodwill or enlightened self-interest, then it may be removed to the accompaniment of war and starvation: but removed it will be" (pp. 43-44). The poor countries need capital and trained scientists and engineers. There are two possible sources for this kind of aid, the West, in particular the U.S., and the U.S.S.R.

So far as the West is concerned, is there one chance in ten that this will happen? "I confess," writes Snow, "that I can't see the political techniques through which the good human capabilities of the West can get into action. The best one can do, and it is a poor best, is to nag away. That is perhaps too easy a palliative for one's

² Snow distinguishes between the industrial and the scientific revolution, meaning by the former the gradual use of machines, the growth of factory labour and the distribution of its products, by the latter the application of real science to industry, beginning thirty to forty years ago.

disquiet. For, though I don't know how we can do what we need to do, or whether we shall do anything at all, I do know this: that, if we don't do it, the communist countries will in time. They will do it at great cost to themselves and others, but they will do it. If that is how it turns out, we shall have failed, both practically and morally. At best, the West will have become an *enclave* in a different world—and this country will be the *enclave* of an *enclave*. Are we resigning ourselves to that? History is merciless to failure. In any case, if that happens, we shall not be writing the history" (p. 47).

Social Reality

Such is Snow's view of the near and far background of the social reality against which his characters operate. It is a precise and realistic view. No doubt it took time to mature, no doubt the writing of *Strangers and Brothers* helped it to mature. But there has been a consistent development from his declared intention in 1938 to examine how much of what we are is due to accidents of our class and time and how much is due to something innate and unalterable within ourselves. The private and the public experience are seen as separate though they interact. The individual situation is tragic, the social condition need not be.

We are justified in leaning heavily upon Snow's position as represented in *The Two Cultures and The Scientific Revolution* for our understanding of his creative work. For he has drawn largely upon his direct experience of social life as he has experienced it, in his novels. In a different way, a knowledge of *The Search* is equally indispensable for an appreciation of the ambitious design of *Strangers and Brothers*. This novel has recently (1959) been re-issued with a preface by the author in which he explains that it was for him a false start. "It was a false start because of the things it did well as well as the things it did badly. I wanted to say something about people first and foremost, and then people-in-society, in quite a different way, and at quite a different level, from anything in this book." And he adds an autobiographical comment: "Arthur Miles is not much like me: he is much less a preliminary sketch for Lewis Eliot than Sheriff is for Jack Cotery or Professor Desmond for Herbert Getliffe." From which we can infer that Lewis Eliot is more like the author.

The Search is concerned with the story of Arthur Miles, a young scientist, intended to represent the pure idealist in science, beginning with his lower middle-class boyhood until he has achieved distinction as a scientist. He is on the

point of realising his ambition of having a research institute under his control to further his work when his reputation is damaged by a serious error in his research just as his appointment seems certain. He has become deeply involved in the manoeuvres attending the foundation of the institute and overlooks the flaw in his piece of research. He realises that he has lost his devotion to science which has yielded to a rival passion—human interest. "As far back as I could remember, those passions had been competing: and for a long time, the human one, which called on all my mind but went far deeper, had been winning in the dark. My disaster had brought it home a little sooner, that was all; in the Committee itself, when all my scientific plans seemed secured, my absorbing interest had been the human conflict, the motives and the difference between those motives and their conscious shape."

It is a fault in the construction of the novel that this deep conflict between rival passions emerges clearly only after the crisis of the action, in retrospective analysis. But among the things which the novel does well is its description of the work of science, its technique, methodology, and standards. This respect for science—amounting at times almost to idealisation—is a continuous note in Snow's later work. Political manoeuvre behind the scenes and the analysis of human motive will also develop as major themes in *Strangers and Brothers*, more dexterously organised into the whole design.

"Strangers and Brothers"

The sequence *Strangers and Brothers* is not yet completed. It is planned to contain eventually ten or eleven volumes. Eight have so far appeared. Each is so written that it can be read independently, but the sequence is a unity to be judged as a whole and not piecemeal. So much so that the suggested reading order now differs from the order of publication and we miss the impact of the whole design if we follow the latter, rather than the former.

The narrator throughout is Lewis Eliot. The sequence is therefore the story of the experience of a single personality, the direct experience and experience gained through observation of the lives of others. Experience of the second kind, in the account of which the narrator takes a secondary place and the lives of others are to the fore, naturally in such a scheme bulks more largely.

Thus:

1. *Strangers and Brothers*, covering the period 1925-33 (published 1940),
2. *The Conscience of the Rich*, period 1927-36 (published 1958),

4. *The Light and the Dark*, period 1935-43 (published 1947),
 5. *The Masters*, period 1937 (published 1951),
 6. *The New Men*, period 1939-46 (published 1954), and
 8. *The Affair*, period 1953-54 (published 1960)
- deal with the experiences of others observed by Eliot, while
3. *Time of Hope*, period 1914-33 (published 1949) and
 7. *Homecomings*, period 1938-48 (published 1957)

deal with the direct experiences of the narrator. This design causes the whole to divide into three cycles³. *Time of Hope* retraces roughly the same time-span in terms of Eliot's own life-history as *Strangers and Brothers* and *The Conscience of the Rich*, and *Homecomings* similarly with the period of time covered by *The Light and the Dark*, *The Masters* and *The New Men*. The third and final cycle begins with *The Affair* and presumably will involve the same pattern of balance between the experience Eliot observes in the lives of others and the experience he directly feels himself. Until this trilogy of cycles is completed we can only provisionally assess the cumulative effect of the whole composition.

True to his announced intention, Snow is precise about the time of action of his novels. He is equally precise about the environment, the class origins of his characters. His field of social reality is contemporary and his people are firmly set in their places.

The environment of *Strangers and Brothers* is the provincial lower-middle class. It tells the story of Eliot's friend George Passant, a solicitor's managing clerk. George is able, passionate and idealistic, the leader of a group of young people, whom he tries to guide from the trammels of convention into a brighter world of promise and freedom. His scheme of regeneration—no more cloudy and half-baked than others given respectable currency in more sophisticated circles at the time—ends disastrously, partly as a result of his own wilful blindness and egotism.

The Conscience of the Rich enters into the far different world of the wealthy Anglo-Jewish aristocracy. Its central character is another of Eliot's friends, Charles March, and its central theme is his personal struggle against his traditional family environment. This struggle is supported by his fiancée, who is also Jewish and wealthy and who has become a Communist. The

conflict aroused by the possessive love of parents for children dominates the book.

The same theme appears in *Time of Hope* (and it will appear again in *The New Men* and *Homecomings*), in the relationship between Lewis Eliot and his mother. After her death by hard work he effects his transfer from the provincial town of his childhood to London, from a job as a clerk to practise at the Bar. And he marries a girl, beautiful but disastrously involved in character, to whom he has long been devoted. The novel ends in his realisation that he cannot end a relationship which has harmed his career because it is part of the vanity of his make-up to need the violent sufferings which it brings.

The Light and the Dark is the story of Roy Calvert, who was a boy in *Strangers and Brothers* and is now a brilliant young graduate scholar of the Cambridge College of which Eliot has become a Fellow. The novel moves in the aristocratic and academic world of the thirties, but its central feature is the spiritual conflict between the light and the dark in Calvert's complex and self-destructive temperament. Like Eliot's wife, he is self-enwrapped to such a degree that isolation becomes desolation. As he says to Eliot in a moment of revealing intimacy: "'We're all alone, aren't we? Each one of us. Quite alone.' He asked: 'Old boy—how does one reach another human being?'"

In his scholarly work, Calvert is concerned with the interpretation of textual evidence of the Manichaean heresy, "a religion which tried to give men peace against the flesh. In its cosmology, the whole of creation is a battle of the light against the dark. Man's spirit is part of the light, and his flesh of the dark. The battle sways from side to side, and men are taking part in it, here and now. The religion was the most subtle and complex representation of sexual guilt.

"Such a subtle and complex religion," Lewis Eliot goes on to explain, "must have drawn its believers from the comfortable classes. There was none of the quick simple appeal that helped Christianity to spark from man to man among the hopeless dispossessed of the Roman slums. Manichaeism must have been chiefly the religion of those with time to think—and probably of a comfortable leisured class in a dying society, a class with little to do except pursue its sensual pleasures and be tormented by their guilt."

Calvert—whose own social position is similar—is deeply drawn to his studies. "Something caught in Roy's imagination, perhaps the religion itself." He attempts to escape from his morbid burden of isolation by seeking some authoritarian guidance, trying vainly to believe in

³ William Cooper, *ib*, p. 15.

Christian terms, even becoming sympathetic, in an irrational contradictory way, with Nazism. In these respects, he differs from Eliot, the radical and unbeliever. But they develop an intense friendship for other reasons. Eliot understands him and protects him for as long as he can, as he protects Sheila, his own wife. In fact, Calvert is a counterpart to Sheila, and Eliot's protection fails in each case—they both kill themselves. Calvert wills his own destruction in a typically ironic way. He becomes a bomber pilot when Eliot has let him know that a bomber pilot stands the best chance of being killed. Although this matter is not overtly expressed, Calvert's self-destructive intensity is symbolic, and the choice of darkness and death by this privileged, gifted, unstable man recalls the similar choice in Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*, where the elaborate symbolism is overt.

"The Masters"

The Masters also has symbolic significance. It is a novel about power-politics, about the feuds, manoeuvres and intrigues of the thirteen Fellows of Eliot's Cambridge College, engaged in the election of a new Master. The surroundings and the ritual by-play are dignified, the dominant motives as raw and unashamed, often as self-seeking and destructive as in more familiar environments of power in the world outside.

The New Men is about the rise into prominence of atomic scientists, the making of the atomic bomb, the attitudes of those concerned, the development of their crisis of conscience as their scientific work becomes more and more involved with social and political reality. Eliot's brother, Martin, is one of a group of atomic scientists. Eliot is himself working in a government department responsible for their work. The novel explores their relationship, involving conflict of personality, of another kind of possessive love.

Homecomings resumes the personal story of Lewis Eliot from the point where it was left at the end of *Time of Hope*. It traces his passage from Cambridge to Whitehall, the end of his first marriage through the suicide of his wife, his successful wartime career in Whitehall at the centres of power and his second, satisfactory marriage. His self-knowledge has matured, his life has more hope: "It was a homecoming such as I had imagined when I was lonely, but as one happening to others, not to me."

In *The Affair* (which takes its title from the Dreyfus case, and is therefore written on the theme of justice), we return to the Cambridge College, seventeen years after the time of *The Masters*. Howard, a young scientist, has been dismissed for

alleged scientific fraud. Howard is politically a fellow-traveller. Moreover, he and his wife are singularly unattractive characters. But fresh evidence is produced and in the end Howard is declared innocent, though the college will not restore his former status.

Despite any reservation we may have about the presentation of Howard's character—would such an able scientist behave so stupidly in his professional conduct?—the novel is, on the whole, perhaps even the better of its kind than *The Masters*. The atmosphere of suspense is less contrived. The style is less restrained, the edge of satire sharper; though the tendency persists to typify some characters overmuch by tricks of speech and to build up atmosphere by too many almost mechanical references to wind, rain, trees and grass—legitimate devices if they are not allowed to become too familiar.

Limitations

Snow's range of social reality is therefore wide and deeply observed, from the lower middle class to the aristocracy, but it has limitations. The world he presents is almost bare of working people, just as his Cambridge is almost bare of students. The characters who appear and re-appear in his novels, sometimes in the foreground, sometimes less prominently, are, therefore, markedly individualistic in their basic attitudes. Often they are highly gifted, exceptionally endowed with the experience of their kind, or with privilege, power, professional ability, sensibility, ambition, sympathy. Yet those who are most profoundly realised, to whom our memory most responds, do not assume heroic stature, the depth of tragedy.

It is tempting to suppose that this may in part be due to the method of presentation. All experience comes to us through the mind of Lewis Eliot, pre-selected, judged. The novelist has a special difficulty inherent in his form, in arriving at objectivity, in eliminating himself from the attention of the reader. And Lewis Eliot is too reflective a person to allow this special difficulty to be readily surmounted. There are times when he is too obviously in the way. And though he often engages our sympathy, he never entirely lulls a suspicion always provoked by people of his kind. He has arrived at his point of observation from poor origins by a mixture of good luck and good management. We can overlook good luck, but are bound to have reservations about the good management. It implies a sagacity, a compromise with worldliness of which the tragic hero is incapable. Lewis Eliot falls far short of tragic stature himself. But he constantly watches for the tragic situation, directs our attention. Yet he does

not obscure our realisation of tragedy by this excessive direction.

For the method of presentation is suited to the author's purpose. The inner design, as Snow explains in a prefatory note to *The Conscience of the Rich*, "consists of a resonance between what Lewis Eliot sees and what he feels." This aim is in keeping with the wish "to say something about people first and foremost and then people-in-society." In practice, of course, this distinction is hard to maintain, and even harder to appreciate as a definition. But Snow consistently pursues the aim. All his chief characters, like Lewis Eliot, are

highly self-conscious, adept at exploring the inner reaches of the self. The consciousness of the isolation of the self reaches its extreme in the case of Roy Calvert. It is always present, less desperately, in others. None can break through from the self into the world in a way to touch our deepest human sympathies. There is a lack of simplicity, of innocence. The characters remain divided, their experience cannot assume heroic stature, the full dignity of poetry, because they can never abandon their bonds of self to become symbols of a total world of general experience. Men may be brothers: they remain strangers.

The Future of Broadcasting

Evidence Submitted by the Communist Party to the Committee on Broadcasting

INTRODUCTION

THE Communist Party recognises that Broadcasting—Sound and Television—are the most powerful means of influencing men's minds, for good or ill. It believes the aims of broadcasting should be above all to help to develop understanding between the peoples of the world. Such understanding is a necessary basis for peace. It should assist in the process of education at all levels and for people of all ages, thus widening the whole horizon of knowledge and interests, and encouraging the highest standards of appreciation, judgment and behaviour based on care for humanity. It should provide entertainment of the best quality for all tastes. And it should help to extend knowledge of, and participation in, all forms of social activity, including democratic institutions, official and unofficial.

We believe that many giving evidence before the Committee will concentrate on the defects of broadcasting without seeking the root causes. Others will dwell at greater length on the social impact of broadcasting and television, and the evil moral and social effects of, for example, pessimism, violence and "easy money" which obtain such prominence. The Communist Party supports many such criticisms; but rejects the idea that Broadcasting and Television are a *basic* cause of today's social problems. Their real sources are poverty, low wages and bad housing, lack of schools and recreative facilities: and unbalanced criticism of radio and television as such

can even divert attention from the real causes.

Radio and Television in themselves are wonderful means of communication, which can be used for good or ill: examples of these potentialities in the fields of education, instruction and entertainment are plentiful even now. But whether these full potentialities are used for progress, human betterment and peace depend upon the social and political aims of those who control them, and it is on this aspect that the Communist Party will concentrate.

PART I

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

The Political Background

The Communist Party believes that the basic fault is that these, the most effective media of mass communication yet devised, are firmly in the hands of those who control the present system of so-called private enterprise and profit-making.

They use them continuously for the direct political purpose of defending that system, and their attitude to all their activities, even those apparently remote from politics, is deeply affected by it.

For example, the most urgent and vital problem which faces the British people is the preservation of peace—the prevention of the outbreak of a third world war. To avert this we must end the cold war and learn to live in peaceful coexistence with countries living under a different social system, socialism. It is agreed on all sides that

the survival of our country, and perhaps the world itself, depends on peaceful coexistence.

But what chance has peaceful coexistence if our people are kept in ignorance of the people with whom we have to coexist, and the system which makes them what they are? Especially if those peoples and that system are constantly attacked and libelled. Irrespective of party politics, it is obvious that accurate and truthful information about the Soviet Union and the socialist countries is vital to the British people *in their own interests*. And such information must cover communism, the system towards which these people are striving; and Marxism, the philosophy on which the system is based, which is causing wider and wider discussion throughout the world.

How have the B.B.C. and I.T.A. faced up to this responsibility? We need to quote only one authority: In his book, *The B.B.C. From Within*, Lord Simon of Wythenshaw, Chairman of the Governors of the B.B.C., 1947-52, states the position (pp. 310-12):

"During my term of office there was a steadily growing fear and detestation of communism, which included, often in a muddled way, Marxism, Stalinism, Russia and the British Communist Party."

After arguing that time given to a minority must be related to its numbers and keenness, but also to the "size and attitude of the majority" he goes on to say:

"... the enormous majority is so bitterly and actively opposed to communism that almost any reference to it is resented; backed by overwhelmingly strong public opinion, Parliament and the Government would simply not allow the B.B.C. to give any substantial amount of time to it. During my chairmanship, the Governors shared the general detestation of communism."

Lord Simon was regarded as, in some respects, an unorthodox chairman, but in these words he adequately and completely expressed the view of the most reactionary supporters of the present system. They do not want to know about socialism, and especially they do not want the working class to know. They wilfully ignore the fact that the "detestation" to which they refer, and which they grossly exaggerate, is largely the creation of the misrepresentations and lies of the press, cinema and previous treatment in Sound and Television.

The Communist Party states that this attitude must be abandoned. If it is not, Sound and Television in Britain will continue to be an instrument of the cold war. It is not merely more time for these subjects that is needed. Lord Simon claimed that a "reasonable compromise"

had been reached—at the rate of half-an-hour a week. But the understanding necessary for peaceful coexistence will require that the Soviet Union, socialist countries and Marxism should be dealt with by people in general sympathy with them, as well as by opponents, whether these opponents claim to be commenting from a socialist or a capitalist point of view.

Attitude to Marxism and Communism

No attempt is made to give the Marxist case a reasonable hearing. The occasions when it has been heard are so rare as to prove our point.

Thus, some time ago, the Third Programme had a whole series of talks on "communism". Not one of the main speakers was either a Communist or remotely sympathetic to communism. Mr. R. Palme Dutt (Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party) protested, and was finally offered four minutes in which to reply to the whole series, an offer so absurd that it was turned down.

Only recently a World Conference of Communist Parties was held in Moscow: its deliberations and decisions were of the utmost importance for world peace. The B.B.C. was compelled to notice the existence of the Conference, but to deal with it, it called in Mr. Zorza, a writer notorious for his anti-communist bias. It was well-known that four delegates from Britain attended the Conference, but not one of them was asked to say a single word.

Again, some commentators, such as Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Freeman have introduced a new type of "trial" of Communists—a trial by television, which was applied to Mr. Frank Foulkes, President of the Electrical Trades Union. Of this Mr. George Brown, M.P., said:

"My concern is that we are substituting for the ordinary rights and liberties of people a loaded, prejudiced atmosphere in which a jury operates with half a dozen commentators . . . they are getting so damned swollen-headed, these chaps, it is getting out of control. It looks to me as if we are dangerously near where the Americans had got . . ." (*Daily Express*, 4.3.60).

One of the grossest examples of discrimination occurred at the 1959 General Election. The B.B.C. is supposedly a public service, yet during this election it was monopolised by the three main political parties: so was I.T.V. The public, which pays for the B.B.C., was denied its rights to hear the case presented by the Communist Party which had put eighteen candidates in the field. Neither Parliament nor the public were consulted about this ban.

Demanding that the B.B.C. should give full rights to the Communist Party in radio and television election broadcasts, Mr. John Gollan,

General Secretary of the Communist Party, said that it had been a deliberate attempt to place the Communist Party at a disadvantage compared with others. It looked as if the authorities were afraid to let the people hear Communist policy. Communist Party candidates were not given a chance adequately to explain their policy, even when, for a few seconds, the electorate were allowed to see their faces on a television screen on a Regional programme. Mr. Gollan accused the leaders of the three main political parties in Parliament of deliberately deciding to deprive the Communist Party of general election broadcasting facilities through a decision arrived at during a secret discussion between representatives of the Tory, Labour and Liberal Parties in Parliament with the B.B.C.

In order to maintain the farce of political neutrality, it was made public that the Communist Party had been refused broadcasting facilities because it had "too few" candidates standing for election. The criterion is purely arbitrary: no indication was given as to the number of candidates held to justify facilities, and, of course, immense difficulties are created for minority parties in running candidates, especially if they are short of money, as working-class parties are likely to be.

The Communist Party is also completely excluded from the official political broadcasts, in spite of its consistent electoral activity both national and local and of the widespread respect and attention which its policy statements and memoranda always command. The exclusion is completely unjustified, and we ask most urgently that reasonable time should be provided.

Discrimination is exercised even in advertising. The *Daily Worker* has been denied advertising facilities by the I.T.A. on the grounds that it is mainly political, though in fact it is no more political than any other newspaper. We understand the *Daily Worker* is presenting its own case to the Commission against this victimisation. But it is a serious threat to all whose views are not acceptable to those in authority—a point which has been grasped by many working-class organisations who have protested at the ban.

Turning to international examples, it is significant that although under the Anglo-Russian cultural agreement of 1959, an arrangement was made for the exchange of programmes, only one such programme was shown. Although this was extremely popular, there have been no more. We very much hope there will soon be a change in the situation, but the reluctance in exploiting such useful and popular opportunities tells its own story.

Another example was when the B.B.C. TV broadcast a policy statement by Chou En-lai. Not trusting the public to make up its own mind, the B.B.C. sandwiched the broadcast between two layers of "experts": one prepared the ground before Mr. Chou spoke, and the other "explained" what Mr. Chou had said. During this process, the broadcast statement was grossly distorted.

The selection and presentation of the news is biased and tendentious. Items are suppressed, irrespective of their news value, especially in relation to the achievements of socialist countries, and their proposals for disarmament and peace. Opinions are often put over as news. Much prejudice against strikes could be engendered by broadcast and television news items, let alone the treatment in discussions; but the "News" never gives a fair statement of the strikers' case.

Attitude to other Minorities

The censorship on Marxism is fanatical and very nearly absolute. But this attitude inevitably extends to all views which are unorthodox and disliked by the Establishment which surrounds the ruling capitalist oligarchy.

Are the political opponents of the Government's foreign and military policies given as free and as equal an opportunity of broadcasting their views as are, say, the supporters (of whichever party) of the Government? Do the decisions of the 1960 Labour Party Conference on Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament and against foreign bases get a fair hearing? They do not, but it is vital that they should.

The Labour movement officially, in spite of the desperate efforts of its leaders to make it respectable, rightly feels itself the victim of discrimination. Conservative opinions are treated as normal: even right-wing Labour does not get equal treatment.

"The B.B.C.," wrote the Labour Party to the Beveridge Committee, "like many other businesses and services, looks on members of its staff with socialist views as being dangerously political in outlook, but takes the curious stand that those with anti-Labour views are somehow non-political. As a result, anti-Labour bias appears in programmes as a matter of course; only socialist views are questioned . . ." (Report of Broadcasting Committee, Cmd. 8117, p. 348).

The Trades Union Congress wrote at the same time:

"We take the shortcomings in the B.B.C.'s handling of social and economic questions to be the result, in part, of a certain social bias among many members of its staff . . ." (Ibid, p. 350).

There has been no significant change since that Report.

The trading wing of the working-class movement fares no better. In a pamphlet published by the Co-operative Party, which represents millions of British co-operators, the B.B.C. is accused virtually of banning references to the Co-operative movement. "It is easier to get the Corporation to broadcast talks by almost anyone than to get it to invite someone to talk on Co-operation and its social aim" (*Reynold's News*, 6.3.60).

Minority groups are treated in the same way. It is proudly boasted that minority rights and views are upheld. But when are the voices of the Scottish and Welsh nationalists heard? And when a woman speaker who was an agnostic and a humanist was allowed to broadcast, the B.B.C. willingly let itself be bullied by highly organised, reactionary political groups into declaring that it would not allow such views to be heard again.

It will be maintained by the orthodox that this is incorrect, that spokesmen from the Liberal and Labour Parties can often be heard, that economists, philosophers, artists, journalists, scholars, writers and statesmen with opposing views can be heard arguing and differing very frequently. The Communist Party does not deny this, but it maintains that such opponents differ only in degree, not in kind. It is our case that the differences are not fundamental, and that they lie within the capitalist system, which these speakers do not wish to change for they accept its basic tenets. It will be found that despite their sometimes heated disputations, with extremely rare exceptions, all will unite in defending its basic principles ("Western civilisation", the "Western way of life" etc.) and attacking the principles of Marxism and communism.

Within this system it is clear why the ruling class aims to control and utilise broadcasting for the purpose of strengthening its hold. In the fight for men's minds, broadcasting has come to play a dominant role, more important indeed than the rest of the mass media. Writing in *Encounter* (August 1959), Mr. Henry Fairlie could say:

"The B.B.C. . . . has done more than any other body to buttress the most conservative institutions in the country, to create and perpetuate reverence for the orders, the privileges and the mysteries of a conservative society!"

The Communist Party maintains that a similar situation exists in commercial television. Similar people from the same class control television and broadcasting for the same reasons. The same enormous propaganda power is retained and concentrated in the same way, exerting the same pressure for the same political and economic ends. **The vast profits accruing from commercial TV**

remain in the same few hands. Thus, despite the denials of Mr. Carleton Greene (*The Listener*, p. 875, 13.11.60), there is a unity of purpose, "a remarkable homogeneity" between B.B.C. and I.T.A. They are to a tremendous degree "assimilated" for fundamentally both have the same aim and purpose, even though there are surface differences.

The General Content of Broadcasting and Television

The distorted political basis of broadcasting and television—distorted because it ignores or maligns the greatest growing and liberating force in the world today—affects all aspects of its work.

Prior to his leaving it, Sir Ian Jacob, late Director-General wrote of the B.B.C. "It is a compound of a system of control, an attitude of mind, and an aim. . . ." It is the contention of the Communist Party that the "control" is such that in no sense can broadcasting be deemed independent of government and politics, that the "attitude of mind" is conservative and reactionary, and that the "aim" is to maintain the *status quo* in society, preserving the capitalist way of life as represented by the aristocratic, financial and commercial interests which dominate Britain, that for this reason treatment of political, social, economic and indeed artistic questions is based on the acceptance of capitalism as the permanent and only "sane" and "democratic" system of society.

In order to preserve the present capitalist system, wrongly called the "Western Way of Life", in this era of political change and unrest, it has become essential to present socialism and communism as warlike, poverty-stricken, evil, corrupt, inhuman, unfree and abnormal, whilst the capitalist world is presented as sane, normal, peace-loving, just, democratic, wealthy and free. It is the view of the Communist Party that this aim, along with the relatively recently introduced profit-making motive on I.T.V., provide the basis on which almost the entire structure of broadcasting has been erected.

The interests which dominate I.T.V. today have for the last fifty years made vast profits out of sensationalism, the exploitation of sex, violence and brutality on the stage, screen and in their newspapers. Commercial television is a frankly money-making concern.

Implicit in much of the advertising which appears on commercial television is the nurturing of unhealthy values, and of social snobbery, and it does not always observe the principles and rules of conduct for television advertising laid down by the Advertising Committee of the Television Companies' Association. Also objectionable are the

surfeit of quiz shows with their expensive prizes.

Since the profits of the programme companies depend, in the last analysis, upon attracting the largest possible audiences to view and listen to their programmes, there is a strong temptation to resist attempts to introduce different types of programmes and to continue to provide the type of entertainment which their past experiences have shown brings the best results.

At the same time, whilst in the purely cultural field the ruling class allows experiments and some new ideas to develop, it is not prepared to allow anything either in B.B.C. or I.T.V. to filter through which threatens to challenge its political and economic domination of society. It does its best to prevent the advocacy of any different form of society which might replace the capitalist system, and it is unduly partial to the pessimistic and despairing aspects of modern culture, which express the decadence of capitalist society and themselves subtly undermine the will to struggle for a better one.

The anti-socialist line is found also in Brains Trusts, comment and religious talks (Report from the Vatican [B.B.C. TV, 1.12.60] was a case in point). It is driven home even in entertainment. Thus, in fictional presentation, a "spy" drama usually means a "spy" from one of the socialist countries, or else he or she is a Communist (for example, two recent B.B.C. serials, "No Wreath for the General" and "The World of Tim Frazer"). Commercial television's "Invisible Man" series was so blatant that the National Council of the Labour Party Peace Fellowship protested, calling the series "a danger to East-West relations".

There are sinister implications in the prominence given to violence and sadism. These are particularly common in features imported for television from the United States, where such forms of hate propaganda are less inhibited. These features are deliberately angled towards conditioning the minds of youth into accepting the belief that the best way to settle an argument or to make a prisoner talk, or to take revenge, is either a brutal beating up, or a revolver shot.

There still exists in Britain a healthy reaction against such degradation of the mind, and there is a public outcry against this type of "entertainment" especially from parents and teachers. The grim fact, which people many not wish to face, is that it is far easier to prepare for total nuclear war if youth is conditioned not to react to violence, suffering and brutality, but to accept it as the normal course of life, as Hitler succeeded in doing to the German youth in the 1930's.

Selection of Personnel

The achievement of these ends is not secured only by rules and statutes. The selection of approved and safe people to control the apparatus is of greater importance.

The present Chairman of the Board of Governors, Sir Arthur Forde, fits into pattern. The Director-General, Mr. Hugh Carleton Greene, is another example.

Like the press, with which it is so closely linked, commercial television is dominated by big business. Of the eighty-nine directors who sit on the boards of the nine programme companies, nineteen represent the press, and eighteen represent big business interests (insurance, banks, electrical engineering combines, etc.). Of the nine programme companies, the press controls one and has interests in five others, the film industry controls one and has financial interests in another three. The big industrial and financial institutions, however, have their main holdings in five, as well as huge investments in the remaining four. Thus not only is the financial tie-up complete, but the main organs of propaganda of the mass media are fully consolidated and integrated, almost monopolised.

No attempt is made to provide even an appearance of liberalism when it comes to the selection of the lower echelons. To have socialist leanings means either non-selection for service in broadcasting, or the sack.

The Future of Broadcasting

Alongside the bad features, the Communist Party recognises many positive achievements in both sound and television. But at the same time these powerful media have a responsibility for raising cultural levels and continuously developing public taste. This will not be done without strong opposition, because it is in the interests of profit making to try to keep the maximum number of people at bread and circuses level.

There is much in present broadcasting which will provide a basis for such efforts. The B.B.C. has succeeded in raising the public taste for classical music through its excellent concerts. It is succeeding in popularising, without vulgarising, the classics of literature through its admirably edited and produced serials. Works by Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray etc. have become extremely popular, according to librarians and booksellers after they have been televised in serial form. The broadcasting of "The Age of Kings" was an admirable attempt to popularise Shakespeare. Some of the broadcasts to schools are excellent. Music hall, variety theatre and melodrama, singing, dancing and sport are among the cultural tradi-

tions of the people. They have been and should be encouraged. Similarly the popularity of the excellent B.B.C. quiz games is based largely on a genuine respect for knowledge. Both the B.B.C. and I.T.A. have done some good work and we think the nation is indebted to the many technicians, producers, cameramen, writers and many others who, when given a chance, show in many items the standards that broadcasting could achieve all the time in a society freed from the shackles of the cold war and the profit motive.

PART II

PROPOSALS

General Approach

Broadcasting and Television are at the moment facing decisions on big future technical developments, which we shall show have a bearing on the fulfilment of the fundamental aims outlined in our Introduction. At the same time, the revision of the Charters of B.B.C. and I.T.A. in 1964 provides an opportunity for examining the system of government and control. In the Communist Party's opinion, useful changes can and should be made which would bring the two institutions closer to the people who use, and ultimately pay for them. These changes are applicable here and now, without any change in the social system; and are in fact loudly demanded by precisely those democratic principles on which the system is supposed to rest.

The Communist Party opposed advertising on Television. Much of it, under capitalism, is simply designed to persuade people to buy goods they do not want, and the cost of such advertising increases the price of the product itself. The influence of advertising on Television — quite apart from the irritation of interrupted programmes—has produced a general policy on the part of the programme companies which has resulted in low quality programmes and an unwillingness to screen anything which might lower the viewer-rating for peak-hour viewing, and thus affect advertising rates.

It has been pointed out that the TV Act is not in fact being strictly applied with regard to natural breaks and balance of programmes; and that too much advertising is taking place.

This view of the character of commercial television was expressed by us when it was first proposed. It has now not only been borne out by experience, but it is a view now adopted by increasingly wide sections of opinion. But the Communist Party, while strongly opposed to any extension of advertising in sound or TV, is not proposing, at this moment, the abolition of I.T.A.

Instead, it is making a number of practical and elementary proposals which it feels should be incorporated into the Charters of both Authorities when they are revised.

The central proposal of the Communist Party in relation to technical developments in the field of sound and television broadcasting is the establishment of an adequate number of *local* stations providing both services.

In general, radio and television services in Britain provide programmes which are largely national in flavour and content, emanating from an organisation which is remote from any influence or control by the general public. While the Communist Party later proposes certain changes in the structure of the existing services which it believes would bring them closer to the people, and more subject to the influence of popular requirements, the establishment of local stations would have an even more profound result in this direction. They would lead to a public more informed about local problems and conditions, would encourage the development of new talent, and would reflect local cultural traditions and requirements. Thus, local stations under local, popular control, resting on the Local Authorities, would be a positive extension of democracy in Britain as far as mass communication is concerned.

Parliamentary Control

Responsibility to Parliament and Government by the broadcasting and Television Authorities is, to say the least, ambiguous. As we have shown, the carefully fostered illusion that broadcasting is free from governmental control is certainly not true. As well as the careful selection of personnel, the State has retained for itself certain extraordinary powers in the Royal Charter and Licence. Members of the Board of Governors can be removed by Order in Council, without reference to Parliament. The Postmaster-General has the right to veto and censorship, also without reference to Parliament. It is said that these powers are purely formal, that they have fallen into disuse through lack of usage and by custom and practice. But experience has shown that such formal powers are swiftly brought to light and utilised in periods of political tension and strife.

We believe the first requirement is a regular Parliamentary debate, at least once a year, in which all matters affecting and appertaining to broadcasting shall be freely discussed.

Any exercise of the veto, or any other important actions by the Postmaster General in relation to programmes or the appointment or

dismissal of a governor, should come before Parliament and require its approval.

Finally, the authorities themselves should be responsible for ensuring that Parliamentary debates on the Broadcasting services are widely publicised, and it would be an advantage if such debates were broadcast.

Governors

The removal and appointment of Governors of the B.B.C. should require approval by the House of Commons.

They should be encouraged to spend more time on their duties than they seem to do at present. More Governors should be drawn from organisations representative of wage workers—the trade union and Co-operative Movement.

General Advisory Councils and Committees

An essential background and stimulant to more Parliamentary discussion on the broadcasting services is more, and better informed, public discussion.

The B.B.C. has Scottish and Welsh regional committees, a General Advisory Council of about fifty members, and other specialised advisory committees. I.T.A. has committees on advertising, religious programmes, children's programmes and sport. It has no General Advisory Council and we consider that one should be instituted. These councils and committees offer the best opportunity for bringing the problems, policies and trends of the broadcasting services closer to the people, but very little advantage is taken of them.

The work of the Advisory Committees for independent television is also described only in the most general terms in the annual report of I.T.A. Little appears to be done to give the existing Committees any sense of authority.

To make these committees a genuine link between the broadcasting services and the public, we propose, for the existing B.B.C. committees, and the committees which should be set up for independent television:

- (a) Discussions and decisions relating to the broadcasting and television services should normally be in public, and widely reported.
- (b) Committees should be obliged to consider and reply to resolutions from organisations, and communications from individuals.
- (c) While members of the Committees should continue to be appointed by the Governors or the I.T.A., the majority would be nominated by responsible organisations, including political parties, subject to recall by them, and obliged to report to them. There

must also be adequate representation of minority opinion on these committees.

- (d) The Agendas and Minutes of all Committees should be open to public inspection.
- (e) Positive steps are necessary to stimulate interest by listeners and viewers in all aspects of the services—prizes for essays, letters, etc. Discussion on programmes and broadcasting in general should be strongly encouraged and the resultant views should receive serious attention from the Authorities.

We would stress the importance of these modest proposals for two reasons. First, the importance of wide publicity for discussion and decision by the advisory committees cannot be overestimated. Second, the representation of political parties on the advisory committees would be an extension of democracy.

The national advisory committees would be the models for local committees to supervise the local stations we propose for sound and television. In the local committees, however, there would be representation from the local authorities, along with representatives of local organisations.

A Consumer Council

There should also be a national body representing in general the listener and viewer, which could provide a forum which could give expression to the ordinary consumer's views on the programme provided by the services. These would be completely outside the machinery of broadcasting, and a valuable check on the Advisory Committees.

Code of Conduct

Concern has been expressed on several occasions at the methods employed by television interviewers, commentators, etc. There have been charges of bias (in our view justified), of unfair comment, of an unequal balance of views, of intrusion into privacy.

In our view it is necessary to establish a code of conduct in relation to sound and television broadcasting which would be valuable for two reasons:

1. It would provide guidance to workers in the medium themselves as to what is and what is not regarded as permissible;
2. Made widely known, it would give the public a certain protection and promote a standard by which they could measure the behaviour of those responsible for programmes.

An international standard of conduct has been agreed to recently at the meeting of television authorities convened by UNESCO. This and the

code of conduct laid down for the Press by the National Union of Journalists could well be adapted and extended for workers in the field of sound broadcasting and television.

Technical Developments

The technical developments which are now under discussion — especially the change to U.H.F., with its requirement of many more stations to cover the whole country — make *local* sound and television stations possible. This in itself has a vital bearing on bringing the services closer to the people.

The other main consideration is to give people the best possible service at the lowest possible cost; at the same time ensuring that they get the benefit of every technical advance, quickly, and without such an advance being exploited by vested interests in the industry.

The Television Advisory Committee proposes a gradual change-over in Television to a 625-line standard, U.H.F. system, as being better for definition, for a change to colour, and to facilitate the international exchange of programmes, sets and equipment. We agree that this change should be made, over a period of time, on both B.B.C. and Independent Television, but with safeguards to prevent hardship to viewers during the change. A definite timetable should be laid down for the change-over for both line-standard and colour, and steps taken to ensure that manufacturers of equipment conform to these arrangements. In the meantime, we suggest B.B.C. and I.T.A. should continue their present services on the existing bands and on the 405 line standard.

Local Broadcasting

The most spectacular technical development, we suggest, arises from the change to U.H.F., with its limited range but allowing many more stations to be established. Thus, while the national changes referred to are being carried through, we consider a start should be made on a number of local television stations, using U.H.F. (bands 4 and 5) and 625 lines. At the same time, there should be established local U.H.F. low-power stations for sound radio.

They would be under the control of independent *local* bodies, including representatives of Local Authorities and organisations, and would be required to provide a large proportion of their time to local programmes covering areas such as cities, conurbations, and rural areas much smaller than the existing regions. There would be no advertising, only announcements of local events.

It would be possible for the bodies controlling the local stations to combine together to provide

a net-worked limited national programme, which would supplement local material, and fill in time not required for local events and programmes. Such a programme should be of the highest quality, and combined with the local material would, in fact, be the most sensible way of providing a third programme about which there is so much discussion. It would be independent of both B.B.C. and I.T.A., and would be democratically constituted from the start. Thus the technical possibilities which exist facilitate a move in the direction of local sound radio and television, and will, in fact, assist in the paramount need to bring control of the whole complex system close to the people.

Such developments should be financed by keeping the license fee at £4—the B.B.C. to receive £3 (minus the small costs of collection). The remaining £1, at present taken as Excise Tax, to be allocated to the local broadcasting studios, with special help to those stations covering remote and thinly populated areas. The Local Authorities should be empowered if necessary to levy a rate up to a certain level, to cover the remaining costs of the local services.

The vast profits now being made by the programme contractors on Commercial Television should be cut by scaling up charges made by I.T.A. to produce a surplus. This should be used to assist in providing the new services; and anything over made available to organisations, such as the Arts Council, to promote the development of artistic and cultural life.

Because we consider there is more than adequate money available in the industry, we are opposed to the introduction of systems such as “pay-as-you-view”, which are for the main purpose of extracting even more money from the public. They have no specific advantages over existing systems, and everything which they could do, could be done better by the existing organisations and the new service.

The development of the broadcasting services on the scale we envisage will demand the services of the most efficient, competent technicians, artistes and staff. The local services will need many more workers of all kinds. It is therefore essential that the best conditions should be enjoyed. Staff should be fully involved, through Consultative Committees, in the working of the Broadcasting services. The wages and conditions of service for all grades must be in line with this responsibility, based on adequate negotiating machinery. Membership of a *bona fide* trade union should be a condition of employment and the unions involved must be fully recognised.

CONCLUSION

In our opinion, these technical changes will bring broadcasting and television closer to the people who receive them. They will stimulate and encourage discussion and public interest, and make possible improved content in broadcasting, and elimination of the many unsatisfactory features of the present time. They will help to make these powerful media more susceptible to public opinion; and they will strengthen belief in and parti-

cipation in democratic institutions. They will make possible deeper discussion and consideration of the fundamental issues concerning the future organisation of our economic system, and make possible ultimately the complete elimination of those factors which vitiate and corrupt so much of the broadcasting and television of the present day. They will help all who believe in peace to resist those forces which are driving to war.

January 1st, 1961.

Discussion Contributions

On How New is the “New Left”?

Joan Simon

IN the final paragraph of his contribution on the New Left, Ralph Russell writes that his points are made “in a positive spirit with the aim of improving the effectiveness of our communist work”. But this is hardly the impression gained from the contribution as a whole. What, in particular, is the purpose of the very personal question—“I do want to know what *he* thinks”—addressed to Arnold Kettle, accompanied by the veiled remark “progressive intellectuals will respect him more for stating them (his conclusions) frankly?” This kind of approach is rather foreign to communist methods of work.

The arguments advanced have little or no bearing on strengthening the Party in a positive way in the present situation when so much is happening in every quarter. After a rather superficial assessment of why the New Left emerged specifically in 1956, the whole thing turns on what the Party should have done then, if it had listened to a few individuals instead of to the E.C.; i.e., it should have “taken the initiative in seeking to develop common activity” with the New Left. To support this contention two points are made: (a) “co-operation with vocal anti-communists is both possible and desirable on issues where we share common ground with them” (a view which, so far as I know, no one has ever disagreed with); and (b) we should not “regard people who leave the Party as traitors and renegades, and . . . treat them accordingly”.

To deal with this second point—despite the all-out attack on Communists and Marxism, after 1956 there was from our side little or no propaganda against those who left the Party. We certainly ex-

posed departures from Marxism in thought and action as the fight proceeded within the Party.¹ But we did not as a Party fulminate against those who left as renegades and traitors, though some individuals may have done. Nor do I think there was anything Machiavellian about this attitude. Whatever we may have felt about the methods some individuals adopted, we were in no doubt about the sharpness of the class battle which must bring defections and casualties.

When these took place the Party rightly kept the main enemy in view and continued the main battle; only pointing out objectively as it did so that those who joined in the offensive against the Party, and consciously provided ammunition for it, were upholding the ruling class. Many who left the Party

¹ The attitude taken was, I think, very much that so graphically summarised by Lenin in *What is to be Done?* “We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with . . . having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now several among us begin to cry out: let us go into this marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: how conservative you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the right to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes . . . you are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. . . . Only let go our hands, don’t clutch at us, and don’t besmirch the grand word ‘freedom’; for we, too, are ‘free’ to go where we please, free not only to fight against the marsh but also against those who are turning towards the marsh.”

under great stress and pressure did nothing of the kind, but, nevertheless, suffered the consequences. Few things could be more distasteful than to be congratulated on one's common sense and superior morality by the Establishment. I have yet to meet a Party member who thought it cause for rejoicing that former comrades went through this kind of thing and I am by no means the only one to have friends among those who are no longer members of the Party.

Our Attitude in 1956

This already answers in part Ralph Russell's main point about our attitude to the New Left in 1956. He says it was the Party's policy to stand aside and neither attack nor aid it in the hope that it would fail to become established; everyone knows this, he adds, including the New Left, which I suppose means that this interpretation was advanced by some Party members at the time. If so they were incapable of seeing things whole and grasping essentials. Recall for a moment the position in 1956 and the tasks which confronted the Party, in particular the need to strengthen organisation and defend Marxism from the revisionists—to uphold the Party and its theory—in the face of the heaviest ideological offensive. One aspect of this total situation was the emergence of the *New Reasoner*, which set up as an alternative centre of Marxism—of “humane Marxism” as opposed to “Stalinism”—and concentrated its criticism on the leadership of the Party and the Soviet Union. Another was the publication of *Universities and Left Review* which, to a lesser extent, had the same general outlook. It was against this background that a few comrades insisted, to the exclusion of almost all else, that intellectuals must work with these groupings and help them to become established, join in all the discussions going on, write for the papers concerned and so on—in order, they said, to see the Party's point of view was put and contact maintained.

The comrades who chiefly urged this were those least able to fight for the Party's policy, since they were themselves taking up a revisionist standpoint at the time. It is relevant to note that, in practice, this was the common ground they shared with the New Left. But, this apart, the Party's approach was quite consistent and clear and formulated in relation to the situation as a whole. It was to lay all emphasis on working to build up Party organisation and discipline, Marxist understanding and effective power to fight back against a ruling-class offensive directed to destroying the Party as a political force.

So this is the sort of thing the Party said. Rather than contributing to enliven the pages of other journals, which have as the main plank in their platform the provision of a leadership alternative to the Party, write for Party journals and further the

discussion there. No doubt formerly inactive sections are being drawn into political discussion by the New Left, and this has its importance, but it is by no means the only point; do not lose sight of the fact that the future of the movement lies, as always, with the organised working class and that its strength and purpose is what counts. The only way to ensure that political thought and action takes a positive direction—in whatever field, whether among students or in the factories—is first and foremost to consolidate and ensure the renewed growth of the Party itself. There can be no effective leadership of the working-class struggle except from an organised Party based on Marxism, and the New Left will no more replace the Party than many other organisations which have attempted to do so in the past.

What Has Happened Since

Just how correct this general interpretation was has, I think, been proved by events, by the development of the Party's work, the momentous changes in the trade union world which paved the way for the Scarborough decisions and so on. Here I would question Ralph Russell's assessment that meanwhile the New Left has been “maintaining for four years viable and increasingly well-produced periodicals”, in general establishing itself ever more securely. In fact the original two journals did not maintain themselves and continue inviolate, but on the contrary, merged into a single periodical. And this was not merely a formal change but symptomatic of other things, too. No longer is the attack on the Party leadership and the Soviet Union a main plank in the platform; no longer is there any pretension to Marxism, to providing an alternative Marxist political line and morality, which amounted in practice to propagation of the most muddled revisionist ideas. There has not been integration with the organised working-class movement, which was a key intention of this general initiative. Instead, the *New Left Review* is itself now merged in a scene which comprises also developing student socialist clubs and branches of Young Socialists, and is dominated by the fight throughout the Labour movement as a whole for implementation of the Scarborough decisions. More broadly the movement among youth extends to all those drawn into peace marches and activities or into protest against colonialism and apartheid. And, too, of great importance, there is a revitalised Y.C.L. at work. In my view it is such changed policies and circumstances—and this is only a very shorthand survey—that have caused a gradual change in the Party's attitude to the New Left, summed up in the assessment of the E.C.

All this is quite straightforward and above board. What, then, is the real point at issue? Because of the changed circumstances Ralph Russell has tried

to justify in retrospect an incorrect political stand taken in 1956. In order to do so he must prove the Party took the wrong road and infers that it adopted petty and underhand tactics, attacked renegades but artfully decided not to attack the New Left, then sat around waiting for it to go under; these tortuous tactics having failed, the Party has now adopted others, perhaps for equally indefensible reasons, which, therefore, Arnold Kettle or a member of the E.C. is invited honestly to explain. I am not a member of the E.C., and I am sure Arnold Kettle is well able to speak for himself, but this kind of query does not really merit such a reply.

I can see that if one really thinks the Party acts this way one might feel impelled to hold it up to obloquy, to point out, more in sorrow than in anger, how mistaken is such an approach, in the hope of improving our communist work. But, of course, this is a subjective assessment, a travesty of the facts. The Party is guided by Marxist theory, which is precisely what allows it to rise above petty manoeuvres, to avoid purely subjective reactions and personal backbiting, and to adopt policies and tactics which change and develop in dependence upon the balance of class forces and the tasks set by the concrete circumstances of the time.

On Paperbacks

C. Eason

HAVING read a number of articles on the Paper-back Revolution in various capitalist journals I chose John Prime's article as the first to read in the December issue of *Marxism Today* hoping to find a Marxist and a working-class approach to the question; but my hopes were bitterly disappointed.

It came as rather a shock that an article three pages long could be written—and accepted by the Editorial Board—for *Marxism Today* without the name of Lawrence & Wishart being mentioned from end to end.

Before, during and since the war they have struggled to provide us with cheap paper-backed weapons for the battle of ideas to which John Prime refers. Many of us got our first understanding of Marxism from the Little Lenin Library and other paper-backs published by Lawrence & Wishart, or from older publications of the Social Democratic Federation. Many today get it from the paper-backed edition of Emile Burns' *Introduction to Marxism*. To many of us paper-backed editions of *Revolt on the Clyde* and *Serving My Time* are treasured possessions. A quick glance over my bookshelves shows *Labour's Turning Point*, *Labour's Formative Years*, *Economics of Peace and War*, *Britain's Crisis of Empire*, *Guide to the Problem of India*—all paper-backs from Lawrence & Wishart, all buried in the silence of this article. At the moment we have in our bookshops the Socialism Today series of paper-backs, quite the best thing that Lawrence & Wishart have done in recent years. And, to pick only the best of several others, we have Bernal's *Prospect of Peace* which we ought to be getting into the hands of every "left" in the

Labour movement, every member of the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, every supporter of the Scarborough decisions. But of all this wealth of weapons not a word.

As a last straw we are offered Allen & Unwin's *Essential Left* at 7s. 6d. with no mention of the fact that the same four books can be bought for 2s. 9d.—a little more than one-third of the "U" price—in paper-backed editions coming from the Soviet Union, let alone any word of thanks to our comrades in the U.S.S.R. for the cheap classics of Marxism-Leninism which they have made available to us—in paper-backs.

On page 56 of my (paper-backed) edition of *Serving My Time* I read:

I am not exaggerating when I say we considered the Literature Secretary a key position in the Branch, and the selling of literature generally the most important of all our political duties. And, saying this now, I accompany it with a plea for more emulation of the same spirit today, when to the present generation the priceless Marxist-Leninist classics are available at a price that would have made our mouths water when we were all starting our lives. We had few bookshops then, and when I go round the country today and see the fine series of Workers' Bookshops and Collet's Bookshops, I wonder sometimes are we making the fullest use of them.

Today there are new opportunities to win the battle of ideas in the Labour movement, there is a new ferment of discussion, a new questioning of old ideas; and with that go new responsibilities on all who handle the weapons for the battle of ideas—on bookshop managers, on literature secretaries and on writers in *Marxism Today*.

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